

# THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Capitalist disaster deepens  
for Argentine working people

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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

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## Workers at Perdue win payment for 'don and doff' time

BY JANICE LYNN

WASHINGTON—Poultry workers on the Delmarva peninsula have won a lawsuit requiring Perdue Farms to retroactively pay some \$10 million in additional wages for the time it takes to put on and take off the clothing and protective gear workers need to perform their jobs, a process known as "donning and doffing" in the industry.

According to the May 13 *Washington Post*, Perdue, one of the nation's largest poultry companies, will pay an additional eight minutes each workday and will record and pay employees for such activities in the future. The settlement will go to 25,000 former and current workers for a two-year time period. Each person can receive up to \$1,000 in back pay.

The eight minutes agreed to in the settlement represents a small portion of set up, preparation, and clean up time that the bosses force workers to do "off the clock." Through such practices the employers have cheated workers out of as much as an hour

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## Nationalist outpouring in Holland after rightist is assassinated

BY JACK WILLEY

The May 6 assassination of Pim Fortuyn, a rightist candidate for prime minister in the Netherlands, has led to an outpouring of Dutch nationalism across the country orchestrated by the capitalist rulers. Tens of thousands of people in Rotterdam, including a sprinkling of African students and Turkish women with head scarves, stood in line at city hall to sign books of condolences or lined the streets during the funeral procession.

Working people and middle-class layers were sucked into similar spectacles of "adoring crowds" in other cities.

Fortuyn was shot five times with a handgun outside a radio station by a left-wing activist, identified so far as a person who worked for Ecology Offensive, an "animal liberation" group. He has refused to make a statement about his motives.

Prime Minister Wim Kok kicked off the nationalist outpouring in an address in which he stated he felt "devastated by this. What went through my head is, 'This is the Netherlands, the Netherlands, a nation of tolerance,'" and added that the killings were a blow to "our nation" and "our democracy." The election was called as a result of the Kok government offering its resignation after a scandal in which it was revealed troops from the Netherlands allowed rightist Serbian nationalist forces to carry out a massacre of Bosnian Muslims in Srebrenica in 1995.

The Netherlands is a constitutional monarchy and an imperialist country with direct colonies in the Netherlands Antilles and Aruba.

After the assassination all political par-

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## Industry-wide strikes rattle bosses in Germany

BY RÓGER CALERO

Germany's first industry-wide strike in seven years entered its second week without a wage settlement being reached between members of the IG Metall union and the bosses in the auto industry.

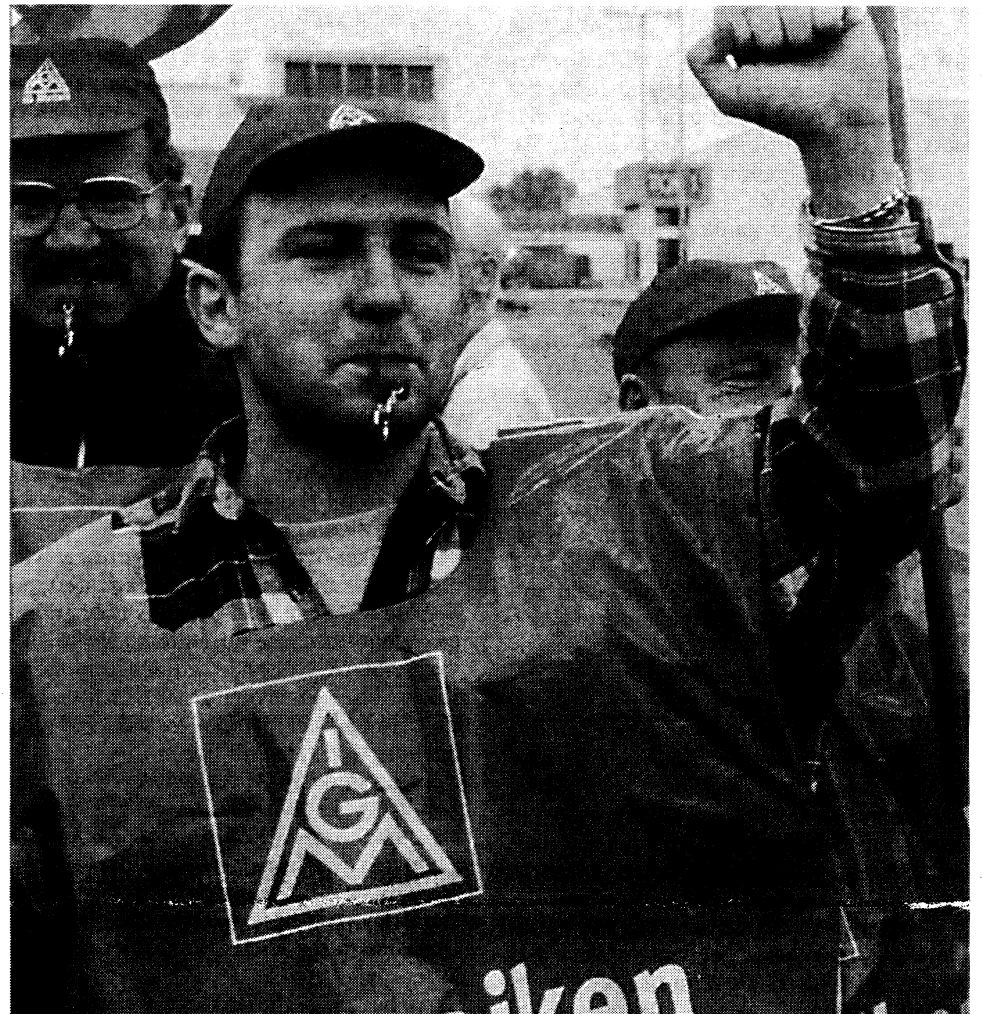
The metalworkers union has extended its series of rolling one-day strikes to the north-eastern states of Berlin and Brandenburg, calling on 130,000 workers from 135 plants to walk out in support of their demand for a 4 percent wage increase.

More than 100,000 workers in 88 plants stopped production during the first week, affecting plants owned by carmakers Porsche, Audi, and the Mercedes-Benz unit of the DaimlerChrysler Corp. Union officials have said that the strikes will continue until the bosses make a reasonable offer.

Negotiations between the employers federation and the union are scheduled to resume May 15, after breaking down in April when the union rejected an offer of 3.3 percent. The union had initially demanded a 6.5 percent increase. Claiming that higher wage hikes would undermine Germany's economic recovery and their companies' international competitiveness, the manufacturing bosses have stuck to their guns and warned of further job cuts.

"We expect at least 4 percent," said Ute Hass, chairwoman of the workers' council at the DaimlerChrysler plant in southern Berlin. "Since the last settlement, productivity has gone up but real wages have actually fallen." Articles in the big-business press have noted rank and file support for the

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Members of IG Metall union at the Mercedes-Benz unit of DaimlerChrysler during first week of strikes. More than 100,000 workers stopped production in 88 plants.

## Attack heightens India-Pakistan conflict

BY GREG McCARTAN

Tensions have heightened between India and Pakistan after three men killed 30 people and wounded 48 during an armed attack in the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir. All but three of the dead and wounded were civilians. A previously unknown group claimed responsibility for the assault in a phone call to a local news agency. It is reported to be one of more than a dozen organizations sponsored by Pakistan that launches armed attacks across the Indian province.

Jammu and Kashmir is divided by a

highly militarized "line of control." One-third of the state is controlled by Pakistan and the other two-thirds falls under the jurisdiction of India.

Indian defense minister George Fernandes said that the government of Pakistan was "directly responsible" for the deaths, and that the regime "trains young people to send them here to spread terrorism. What else can we expect from them." The regime in Islamabad denied any connection to the attack, saying that it provides only diplomatic support to organizations fighting India.

India and Pakistan have together amassed 1 million troops backed by tanks and heavy artillery along their 1,800-mile border since December, when a group of men launched an armed attack on India's parliament building. Both sides are nuclear armed have placed their forces on high alert.

The U.S. administration has pressed the government in Pakistan to crack down on the activities of organizations opposing Indian rule in Kashmir and urged both sides to refrain from starting a military conflict. The Pakistani government has arrested several thousand people claimed to be associated with Kashmir opposition groups and banned five organizations.

As the tensions mounted over the past week, Bush dispatched assistant secretary of state Christina Rocca to New Delhi and

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## Coal companies' greed contributes to devastating floods in W. Virginia

BY JEREMY ROSE

LOGAN, West Virginia—Another round of devastating floods here are generating a discussion among working people about whether or not the disasters are partly the result of practices of coal companies involved in mountaintop removal.

In this operation companies use giant earthmoving machines to take off the top of a mountain in order to dig up a vein of coal below. The Bush administration approved regulations May 3 that would have allowed coal companies to dump material stripped from the mountains into streams and valleys. The big coal companies hailed the decision.

Six days later Chief U.S. District Judge Charles Haden issued a 47-page ruling in Charleston, West Virginia, that would end the long-standing practice of coal companies putting fill into waterways and valleys. He ordered the Army Corps of Engineers to cease issuing new permits for mountaintop

removal valley fills.

The ruling chastised the Bush administration and the Environmental Protection Agency for portraying its May 3 ruling as a technical change. Since 1977 the Army Corps of Engineers own regulation has prohibited mining companies from dumping rock and dirt in nearby waterways. Haden said the May 3 ruling was a special favor to the coal companies, a move that would codify 20 years of illegal dumping with the blessing of the Army Corps.

The coal companies have defended the practice, saying they must be able to dump the fill in order to preserve jobs. The ruling "has the potential impact to shut down the majority of coal mining operations in Appalachia," said William Caylor of the Kentucky Coal Association.

Many miners interviewed here said they believe the ruling was directed against miners. Some pointed to past rulings by Judge

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# New York laundry workers win a union

BY BILL ESTRADA

NEW YORK—After five months on the picket line, some 50 workers employed by Rainbow Laundry—formerly known as Flex-O-Tex—in the south Bronx, New York, succeeded in winning a contract and union recognition. “We won, we won what we fought for!” exclaimed striker Elsa Perez. “We all stuck together and now the other workers who didn’t join us see us with great respect. We are so happy and so proud of ourselves.”

The strikers are inviting all their supporters, friends, and other workers from surrounding laundries to a May 18 victory celebration.

About one-third of the workers walked off the job on December 5 after the owner Gabriel Blau refused to negotiate a contract with the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees (UNITE). He claimed that he couldn’t afford to meet the workers’ demands.

The workers organized pickets every single day of the strike. The laundry operated at only half-capacity during most of the strike, running four hours a day. Many who stayed on the job were fired or laid off. Juana González, a striker and presser for two years making minimum wage, pointed out, “Our fight is for those who worked inside too. They were intimidated by the company to not join us. Now they are with us.” Two of the company’s main clients, the Helmsley and Continental hotels, canceled their business with Flex-O-Tex.

In late April the company was sold and the new owners changed the name to Rainbow Laundry. Blau stayed on as an associate. The new owners accepted the workers’ demands but insisted that all the strikers, some of whom have worked at the laundry for many years, must come back as new hires. Workers and supporters held a rally in front of Rainbow on May 1 to protest this attack on their seniority rights. Later that same day the company gave up and arranged for a meeting to sign a contract.

“During our rally on May Day, they even came out to ask us to get back to work that same day! They made a lot of promises to us but we said no. We told them: sign the contract and then we work,” stated Maritza

Córdoba, a leader of the strike.

According to Córdoba, a presser for 10 years who makes \$7.32 an hour, the new contract includes general agreements on substantial wage increases, medical insurance, paid vacations, and sick days. Many workers making minimum wage will automatically receive a 50-cents-an-hour raise to bring them into line with the hourly starting wage of other unionized laundries of \$6. Under the new contract, overtime hours will be paid at time and a half. Before the strike any overtime work was at regular pay. The union’s contract demands have been for a 75 percent wage increase in the first year, 45 percent the second year, and 40 percent the third year as part of a three-year agreement.

These raises are currently under negotiation, along with establishing a regular work schedule of two shifts with no mandatory overtime.

“This is an important victory for us but we still have a fight going on inside,” said Córdoba. “Besides raises and benefits, we want better working conditions. There is still no drinking fountain, no clean bathrooms, no lunch room, and not even a place where you can heat up your lunch! This must change!”

Right now workers heat their meal on top of the machines they operate. This ongoing fight is “all part of winning respect and dignity,” noted Perez. “They also need a mechanic to fix leaks off the machines so we don’t work on puddles of water.”

A worker in the washing department who didn’t walk out commented in an interview outside the plant that “there is now an improvement because through the strike they have won respect and confidence in themselves. The new owner treats us a little better.” He had decided not to walk out after the boss threatened to fire him.

During the strike, the workers won support from the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN), a housing advocacy group, the Bronx Environmental Action Coalition, the San Geronimo and St. Luke’s Roman Catholic churches in the Bronx, and other community organizations.

All but one of the strikers are women from Latin American countries. Most are from the



Militant/Bill Estrada

Striking unionists on picket line in December at Flex-O-Tex Laundry in Bronx, New York. Workers won contract that includes pay raise, health benefits, and paid vacation.

Dominican Republic, Honduras, Puerto Rico, and Mexico.

Through the course of their five-month fight, the Flex-O-Tex strikers reached out for support. They sent a delegation of half a dozen workers to participate in a festive march and rally of 1,000 striking nurses on Long Island in February. The nurses were later victorious, winning a favorable contract. UNITE-organized workers at Princeton Laundry, located across the street, participated in several of their rallies as well. This victory at Rainbow Laundry is part of other successful organizing drives by

UNITE of industrial laundries in the last year and a half in the New York-New Jersey-Connecticut area.

Expressing the confident mood of many of the workers, Córdoba noted, “In this union fight the company makes promises and talks pretty but talk is for the politicians. We want results. We aren’t begging on our knees either. We’re talking *huelga* (strike) if they still don’t meet our demands.”

Bill Estrada is meat packer and member of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 342 in New York.

## Stock market decline saps employees’ pension funds

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

The decline in the stock market over the past two years is having a devastating impact on public employees’ pension funds. The money, which is supposed to have been set aside to pay retirement benefits for the millions of public workers, is being gambled away in stocks, bonds, and real estate by federal, state, and local governments.

Public funds’ assets dropped \$370 billion in 2000 and 2001 because of investment losses, according to Spectrem Group, a pension consultant based in Chicago. The total value of state and local pension funds at the end of 2001 was \$2.3 trillion, which is expected to cover about 15 million public school teachers, garbage collectors, and other municipal workers. Last year the public pension funds averaged a loss of 4 percent.

By law, monthly benefit payments to retired public workers are supposed to be guaranteed, so local governments argue that in order to make up the shortfall caused by the declining stock value of these funds, they must cut spending on social programs and/

or raise taxes.

In this way capitalist politicians seek to pit workers who are currently employed against retirees. In New York City, for example, billionaire mayor Michael Bloomberg is demanding massive concessions from the unions in pensions and other benefits, cuts in funds for education, as well as reduction in care for the elderly.

According to Bloomberg News, the New York City government estimates it needs to contribute \$1.77 billion, almost \$1 billion more than two years ago, for its five employee pension funds in the fiscal year that begins July 1.

The states combined have a \$27 billion cumulative budget gap for this fiscal year, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures. But you won’t hear proposals from any capitalist politicians to halt or reduce the interest payments to wealthy bondholders and other coupon clippers to cover this gap, just more demands for “sacrifice” by working people. New York State and City, for example, each spend about \$4 billion a year on debt payments.

## THE MILITANT

### Omaha meat packers: ‘Si se puede!’

The recent union victory by packinghouse workers in Nebraska reflects years of determination by vanguard workers to win dignity and better conditions on the job. Their struggle and slogan “yes we can” will be emulated by growing numbers of workers around the world who are learning the power of our collective strength.



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# Meat packers seek to build on union victory

## Omaha unionists reach out to other workers as they face a fight for a contract

BY LIZBETH ROBINO

OMAHA, Nebraska—"We're taking the news of our election victory to other plants so we all can be stronger and win a better contract. It's important to all be united," said a member of the workers committee at ConAgra.

On May 3, production workers at ConAgra's Northern States Beef plant won a union representation election by a vote of 252 to 126. This is the first union victory among production workers at one of the large slaughterhouses here since June 2000, when the United Food and Commercial Workers union (UFCW) began a campaign to organize some 4,000 Omaha meat packers.

The participants in the workers committee, which led workers throughout the six-month fight leading up to the election, emphasized the aid this 2-1 victory can be to other meat packers in nonunionized plants. At a postelection celebration, workers spoke about the importance of bringing this momentum to other plants and helping workers out in any way possible.

On May 10, nine kill floor workers from ConAgra gathered at 5:15 a.m. at the plant gate to Nebraska Beef, a large cut-and-kill plant of 900 workers located a few blocks from ConAgra. Another five gathered in the afternoon to greet workers after their shift. They carried hand-lettered signs announcing, "We won the union at ConAgra" and "ConAgra—yes did it!"

They also passed out a handwritten "message of solidarity and support," which the workers committee had organized to write over lunch the previous day. It announced their victory, and encouraged Nebraska Beef workers to press on, so that they "can also win the union. Together we can do it!" Production workers responded favorably to the news, with many stopping briefly to talk,

saying that they also needed the union.

"It was great to see the workers from ConAgra. It made a big impact," said a kill floor worker who had been active in the union drive leading up to last year's election. "Many people were talking about it in the locker room and lunchroom. A lot of us want the union, but we have to get organized."

Production workers at Nebraska Beef lost the union election in August 2001 by a 452-345 vote. The UFCW subsequently charged irregularities, and the case is still pending in appeals court. After a one-year period, a new election can be held. A May 15 meeting, where Nebraska Beef workers will plan out the next steps in renewing their fight for the union, has been set.

A message of solidarity congratulating the Omaha meat packers on their victory was sent from Chicago by 37 illegally terminated workers at the American Meatpacking Corporation and Rymer group. These workers are fighting to receive the benefits due them when the companies abruptly shut down operations without advance notice.

"The good news has reached Chicago," they wrote. "Now we have the responsibility to ensure that the ConAgra bosses get the message: recognize our brothers and sisters as the union! Sign a contract acceptable to the workers!"

Taking the confidence from their victory to the shop floor, workers organized to defend a co-worker who was told by a supervisor that "he would have to lower his wage now that the union is coming." The worker immediately sought out Olga Espinoza, a leader of the workers committee, and informed her of this attack. She gathered three other workers on the spot and confronted the supervisor.

"He was afraid," said Espinoza. "The four of us confronted him, and he tried to lie his

## Strikers at Hershey remain strong



Militant/George Chalmers

The strike at Hershey Foods Corp. in Hershey, Pennsylvania, remains 100 percent solid. The 2,700 members of Chocolate Workers Local 464 walked out April 26 over company demands for concessions in health-care benefits. The strikers and their supporters are organizing a solidarity rally on May 16 to answer attacks on the union that have been run in full-page ads in local newspapers. The strikers are considering picketing other sites owned by Hershey Foods. Union officials said the company is beginning to experience shortages of several brands, including miniature candy bars, as a result of the strike.

way out of what he had done. He rapidly backed down, and didn't lower our co-worker's wage. The company now knows we have a union, and they know they have to walk more carefully."

The continued activity of the workers in the week following the election is of concern to the company. ConAgra officials dis-

tributed a letter on May 10 to all employees with their paychecks. It stated that they are disappointed with the outcome of the election, but that they respect the workers' decision and that it is time to move forward. They promised an employee appreciation lunch in the near future, and reminded workers that "working together we can be successful."

"We jumped the first hurdle, but the struggle to win a contract will depend on a sustained fight inside the plant," said Lisa Rottach, a kill floor worker.

Some workers think that now the company is ready to work with the union to quickly settle a contract, while others have a different view. "This picnic is to calm us down so we don't demand so much in our contract," said a 20-year veteran of the kill floor. "I've begun explaining to co-workers that we shouldn't be fooled by this."

## Trucking companies in Mexico urge gov't response to U.S. border-crossing restrictions

BY RÓGER CALERO

Trucking companies in Mexico are demanding the government block entry of U.S. trucks into the country. This occurs as the U.S. government continues to refuse to allow Mexican trucks into U.S. territory to deliver goods, as was agreed to under the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).

The Mexican trucking companies also filed a \$4 billion lawsuit in Brownsville, Texas, against the U.S. government for violating NAFTA regulations that called for allowing long-haul trucks from Mexico to travel freely into California, Texas, Arizona, and New Mexico starting in 1995. The trade pact was signed by the U.S., Canadian, and Mexican governments in 1994.

"By its behavior the U.S. continues to violate the treaty," said José Muñoz, head of Mexico's national transportation ministry May 2. The U.S. government has refused to allow trucks in even after a NAFTA arbitration panel ruled last year in favor of Mexico in the dispute.

Instead, Washington has unilaterally maintained a series of measures that prohibit Mexican truckers from traveling more than 20 miles into the United States, forcing them to transfer their cargo onto trucks owned by U.S. companies. One such ploy has been to impose strict safety checks and insurance requirements that delay Mexican trucks at the border. U.S. trucking companies and government officials claim the measures are needed because Mexican trucks pose a "safety" and environmental threat to the U.S. public.

The Teamsters union officialdom along with some environmental organizations have actively campaigned for Congress to extend these restrictions. On May 1 the Teamsters joined a lawsuit filed in San Francisco that seeks an emergency injunction to block legislation that would open U.S. highways to Mexican trucks.

"Trucks that cross our border from Mexico must meet U.S. emission standards," said Teamster president James Hoffa. "Unless these standards are met, we should not allow these trucks to further pollute the air we breathe." Similar arguments have been used by both Democratic and Republican politicians supporting the protectionist legislation.

Meanwhile, Mexican president Vicente Fox suspended for the next seven months a 20 percent import tax on high-fructose corn. The tax was approved by the Mexican Congress in January following protests by thousands of sugar and corn growers. The farmers demanded government protection from the massive imports from U.S. companies that were flooding the market in Mexico, wiping out domestic production of sugar and corn used for making syrup. Before the measure was adopted the syrup was being brought into the country with zero tariffs. The tax was also in response to Washington's refusal to allow Mexico to sell 650,000 tons of sugar in the U.S. market without any tariffs as established by the NAFTA agreement.

News articles published in the big-business press have also noted the impact of the economic crisis on workers employed at plants on the Mexican side of the border.

The *San Diego Union Tribune* reported that the number of workers employed by the export oriented plants, better known as *maquiladoras*, recently dropped from a peak of 1.5 million to 1.3 million. Many companies reported laying off workers for the first time in a decade. Big employers like auto parts maker Delphi Corp., Mexico's largest private employer, cut its workforce by nearly 15,000 as international orders declined.

In Ciudad Juarez alone, in the border state of Chihuahua, bosses fired 45,000 out of 257,000 workers, according to the *San Diego Union Tribune*.

In the country as a whole some half a million workers have lost their jobs since President Fox came to power in December 2000. Last April he announced that a \$1.1 million cut in social spending, the fourth cut during his administration, was necessary in order to confront the country's budget deficit.

## Lockheed workers end strike in Georgia

BY NED MEASEL

MARIETTA, Georgia—Members of the International Association of Machinists ended their seven-week strike against Lockheed Martin Aeronautics Co. April 28 after voting by a 63 percent margin to accept a new contract proposed by the company.

The latest offer was the third from the company and followed two days of federally-supervised negotiations in Washington, D.C. For the 2,700 workers at the plant here the central issues in the strike involved pensions, health insurance, and moves by Lockheed to outsource work.

In the final contract the company agreed to increase pension payments from \$47 to \$56 a month per year of service. Lockheed won increased payments by workers for health insurance with a stipulation that premium hikes are to be capped for one year. The company agreed it will negotiate with the union proposals to outsource work on a case-by-case basis.

The contract contains the same wage and economic proposals as the previous one. It includes a 10 percent wage increase over three years and a \$1,000 signing bonus.

The strike helped force the company to withdraw a contractual clause that would have prohibited Lockheed workers from walking on the picket line of another union.

The contract introduces a new work schedule called "9-80" that can be implemented on a department-by-department basis. This will allow a schedule of four nine-hour days and an eight-hour day one week, and four nine-hour days the next week. With this setup the company will be able to schedule 80 hours of work in nine days without paying any overtime to union members.

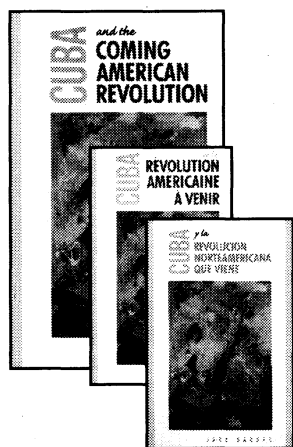
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## CUBA and the Coming American Revolution by Jack Barnes

There will be a victorious revolution in the United States before a victorious counterrevolution in Cuba

— Fidel Castro, March 1961

*Cuba and the Coming American Revolution* is about the struggles of working people in the imperialist heartland, the youth who are attracted to them, and the example set by the people of Cuba that revolution is not only necessary—it can be made. Preface by Mary-Alice Waters. **In English, Spanish, and French. \$13.00**



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# Nationalist outpouring in Netherlands

Continued from front page

ties suspended their election campaigns. Photographs in the press showed posters covered over out of respect for the slain rightist.

Fortuyn, who formed the List Pim Fortuyn (LPF) party just a few months ago, presented himself as an "outsider" representing the little guy against the "self-important political elite" of the ruling Dutch parties. The LPF's popularity ratings soared as his campaign seized on insecurities in the middle class and layers of working people buffeted by the world capitalist social and economic crisis.

Once a professor of sociology who said he had Marxist views, Fortuyn was fired from the leadership of the Livable Netherlands party for statements unfavorable to Islam and for proposing that a constitutional clause banning discrimination be set aside. At the time of this death, Fortuyn's party was polling among the top three contenders, and it continued to pick up steam as election day neared.

The country is currently ruled by a coalition government of the Labor Party, Liberal Party, and Democrats '66. As these parties have proven incapable of ameliorating the impact of the creeping social crisis on workers, farmers, and middle-class layers, Fortuyn received a hearing among a broad spectrum of the population.

Fortuyn used his liberal background and the fact that he is gay to try and put a progressive coloring to his reactionary proposals. At the center of his appeal was posturing as a defender of women against what he portrayed as a backward and threatening immigrant tide of Muslim peoples whose treatment of women threatens to undermine progress registered in the country over the past decades.

"Cultural developments which are diametrically opposed to the desired integration and emancipation, such as arranged marriages, or revenge and female circumcision, must be fought," he said. "Discrimination against women in fundamentalist Islamic circles is particularly unacceptable."

Right-wing sociologists in the Netherlands accuse first-generation Algerian and Moroccan youth, primarily raised by single mothers, as being "decultured." They falsely claim Muslim women are never allowed to discipline any of their male children, contributing to criminal behavior.

Fortuyn pounded away at the need to defend "the nation" and "Dutch culture," proclaiming, "Large groups in the community are lagging behind in social and cultural terms. These groups often originate from countries which did not participate in the Judeo-Christian-humanist developments which have been taking place in Europe for centuries. These shortfalls in development are highly regrettable." He called for "maximum resistance" to immigration and denying entry to refugees as a solution.

## Extent of immigration

Nearly 10 percent of the country's 16 million people are not of Dutch or European descent, the highest rate in Western Europe. In Rotterdam, a working-class city of 600,000 where Fortuyn lived, 45 percent of the population is foreign-born.

Seizing on the large-scale immigration from predominately Muslim countries, Fortuyn said, "If I could arrange it legally, I would simply say: no more Muslims can come in.... I think 16 million Dutch is enough. The country is full."

Using the Muslim population as a scapegoat for rising crime rates, Fortuyn called for "public order and safety" to make the streets "safe" again. He projected putting more cops on the streets and giving the military police the same powers of regular cops to arrest working people. Regarding the border patrol, he said by "adding police and customs officers, the capacity of these flying squads could be doubled in a year."

Fortuyn made a distinction between halting immigration and pressing those immigrants who wanted to stay to learn the Dutch language and adopt "Western traditions." Press reports have noted that layers of the immigrant population in the country were attracted to Fortuyn's proposals to curb crime and take steps to better integrate immigrants currently in the country. In one mosque 20 percent of ballots were cast for Fortuyn in a recent election. One news reporter interviewed two Turkish women who voted for "the professor" because "their

neighborhood had become dangerous because of newcomers."

His chief deputy, and now the party's new leader, Joao Varela, is a Black businessman and an immigrant from the Cape Verde islands, located off the coast of West Africa.

## Parallels from U.S. history

Like other rightists who are campaigning for a halt to immigration in France, Austria, and other countries in Europe, Fortuyn's proposals are not outside the channels of bourgeois politics.

After several decades of massive immigration into the United States in the late 1800s and early 1900s, layers of the capitalist class began organizing to severely limit immigration and completely exclude working people from whole regions of the earth from being able to gain legal access to U.S. territory.

The Immigration Act of 1917 for the first time established a literacy test, which the U.S. Congress hoped would significantly limit immigration. The law also expanded racial discrimination against Asians by defining a geographic "barred zone" that excluded working people from India and most other parts of Asia, except for Japan and the Philippines.

The first law that was successful in severely limiting immigration came in 1921, as the U.S. rulers moved to put the brakes on the numbers of people allowed into the country in order to assimilate those already there. Quotas for various nationalities were established, cutting total European immigration to 350,000 a year compared to slightly less than 1 million a year before World War I. Northern Europeans were favored over those from southern and eastern Europe and the prohibition of Asians from the "barred zone" as well as all Chinese continued.

The Immigration Act of 1924 further restricted immigration, limiting the total from Europe to 164,000. The basic elements of the quota system were left in place until the Immigration Act of 1965, which ended the official bias against immigrants from Asia and southern and eastern Europe.

## Stand on European Union

During his campaign, Fortuyn demon-



Election billboard in the Netherlands, blacked out as a sign of "public mourning" following the assassination of rightist politician Pim Fortuyn. The Dutch ruling class seized on his slaying to whip up an outpouring of nationalism.

stratively tried to distance himself from ultrarightists like Jean-Marie Le Pen in France and Jörg Haider in Austria. While calling for defense of the Netherlands' sovereignty, he spoke in favor of remaining in the European Union, demanding a reduction in "the bureaucracy in Brussels," where the EU is headquartered. He avoided anti-Semitic scapegoating in his speeches. In regards to the Palestinian struggle, he demonstratively spoke out in favor of Israel and the steps it has taken to try to crush the liberation struggle there.

Frustration among working people is growing over the declining quality of government-funded social services and the bureaucracy of a social-welfare capitalist state. Tapping into genuine outrage over what he called "a highly disappointing health-care system...burdened with a huge bureaucracy...with its waiting lists resulting in unnecessary deaths," he proposed steps to dismantle public medical care and expand

privatization. He offered a similar proposal to confront the deteriorating education system.

Disabled workers have the right to receive government assistance under Dutch law. Fortuyn, claiming that 1 million people are on disability, campaigned to limit benefits to only those with work-related illnesses. He projected programs to also cut those workers off disability.

With the abrupt death of Fortuyn, the ruling class in the Netherlands has seized on the moment to help whip up an outpouring of Dutch nationalism and cover up the division of social classes that exists in the country. Labor Party prime minister Wim Kok and a senior representative of Queen Beatrix attended the funeral mass. Tens of thousands of people lined his funeral procession May 10 as thousands raised their hands in the air chanting, "Pim Fortuyn, Pim Fortuyn," and sang "You'll Never Walk Alone," a popular support song for the Rotterdam soccer team.

# 'Militant' fund supporters plan public events

BY PATRICK O'NEILL

Supporters of the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* in New York and New Jersey are planning meetings in late May and early June to help fund the two socialist publications, part of an international drive to raise in the range of \$50,000 by June 15. Funds for the two periodicals—which are financed by working people, not big business—are needed to offset the high costs of producing, printing, and distributing the newsweekly and Spanish-language monthly publications.

The New York/New Jersey meetings will feature Socialist Workers Party leader Jack Willey and Arrin Hawkins, a leader of the Young Socialists, both of whom will have just returned from participating in a May 17–18 forum of young socialists in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. The two will speak on "Prospects for building an international socialist movement of working people and youth" at forums in Upper Manhattan, the Garment District, and Brooklyn areas of New York, and in Newark, New Jersey.

The initiative taken by socialist workers and youth in New York and Newark helps set a good example of how the largest number of supporters of the paper can be won to making a contribution over the coming weeks.

Other public fund meetings now being discussed from London to Sydney to Atlanta will take up major developments in the class struggle, and the unfolding social movements of resistance to the offensive of the imperialist powers at home and abroad.

The meeting being planned in Cleveland will discuss the struggles by coal miners, their widows, and their communities, to defend their living standards, lives, and limbs against the coal barons. The recent mine workers union victory in the contract fight at Maple Creek in Pennsylvania was the fruit of miners' determination through a series of running confrontations with the company.

Fund supporters in Chicago have begun

planning a meeting on May 26 to coincide with a weekend of volunteer work to prepare their move into a new hall and Pathfinder bookstore in a workers district in the city. Joel Britton told the *Militant* that organizers are "confident that we can involve several young people who participated in the Midwest Socialist Conference last month."

Supporters of the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* in a number of cities in the United States and other countries have adopted goals for the international fund drive. The international campaign to increase the readership of the socialist periodicals and books (see article page 5) offers a good opportunity to win contributors. Fund organizers should also contact long-term readers of the two publications to ask for a contribution. Socialist workers plan on taking the appeal to co-workers and those they meet on picket lines, and at protest actions and political events. A bilingual flyer explaining the fund drive, sent out to distributors of the *Militant* last week, will aid in these efforts.

In response to previous *Militant* articles about the appeal, a couple more long-time partisans of the English-language weekly and Spanish-language monthly have sent in contributions directly to the *Militant* offices in New York over the past week. "Enclosed is a financial contribution to help you continue the great work you've all been doing," wrote Roger Bland from Chicago in a note accompanying his \$400 check. With this and other donations the fund presently stands at

\$1,700.

Fund directors in every city can keep track of the progress of the drive by recording contributions on the website established for the campaign. We encourage fund organizers to update the database with the local goal and the pledges and contributions made in each area. Reports sent to the *Militant* on plans and progress in the drive will help readers see how the fund's success is tied into the political work of socialist workers and youth as part of the broader working-class resistance.

## Special meetings for the *Militant*/ *Perspectiva Mundial* fund drive in New York and New Jersey

### From Haiti to the United States: Prospects for Building an International Socialist Movement of Working People and Youth

Hear Socialist Workers Party leader Jack Willey and Young Socialists leader Arrin Hawkins, participants in May 17–18 meeting of university students and young socialists in Port-au-Prince, Haiti.

#### Garment District, New York:

Fri., May 24, 7:30 p.m. Dinner at 6:30 p.m.  
545 8th Avenue, 14th Floor. Donation:  
\$4 program, \$5 dinner. Tel: (212) 695-7358.

#### Brooklyn and Upper Manhattan, New York, and Newark, New Jersey:

Dates and times to be announced



# Socialists plan sales to coal mining regions

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

Supporters of the circulation drive to win new readers to the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* are building momentum by organizing to get the publications to workers on picket lines and at plant gates. They have sold a number of papers to workers who expressed interest in the recent victories by meat packers in Nebraska and coal miners in Pennsylvania, as well as in the lessons of the elections in France discussed in last week's issue.

"We visited four mine portals in southern West Virginia this past week and received a warm response to the *Militant*, selling 56 copies," said Jeremy Rose in Pittsburgh. "We also sold several more papers and a *Militant* subscription when we went to workers' homes in a few mining towns."

Rose reported that the sales team sold 16 papers at the Hobet mine and 19 more at the Marrowbone mine in Mingo county. Both are mountaintop removal mines. They also sold 20 papers at USX's underground mine outside Pineville. "United Mine Workers members and contract mine workers alike enthusiastically welcomed the news of the union victories at the Northern States Beef plant in Omaha, Nebraska and the victory of miners at the Maple Creek mine in Pennsylvania," he said.

Socialist workers in other coal mining regions are also planning sales teams, among them a May 25-30 trip to the western coalfields in Colorado and other states. To help launch the coal team they are planning a Militant Labor Forum featuring a talk on the five Cuban revolutionaries who are held in U.S. prisons. Readers who are interested in participating in a coal team should contact the *Militant*.

After the fourth week of the drive participants in the campaign have sold 381 *Militant* subscriptions, 168 *PM* subscriptions, and 164 copies of Pathfinder's *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution* by Jack Barnes. Below are reports highlighting sales activities in several areas. Drop us a line or two on sales results in your area for next week's issue.

## Workers snap up 'PM' at Levi's plants

BROWNSVILLE, Texas—We sold the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* at the two Levi-Strauss plants in Brownsville and San Benito that are scheduled to close this August, tossing 1,100 people out of work. The Brownsville plant, which opened in 1972, is considered one of the highest-paying workplaces in the Rio Grande Valley. Levi's began moving work out of the valley plants in 1999 as they shifted to a so-called "product-driven" organization. We sold five copies of *PM* at the Brownsville plant gate and several more going door-to-door in the neighborhood near the plant.

The team also campaigned for Socialist Workers candidate for Congress Anthony Dutrow with a literature table near the U.S.-Mexican border in downtown Brownsville. A woman who works in the Tyco *maquiladora* plant across the border in Matamoros, Mexico, bought a *PM* and a copy of the Spanish-language edition of Peru's *Shining Path: Evolution of a Stalinist Sect* by Martin Koppel, after a discussion with Dutrow on working-class politics in Latin America. Our sales totals here were 15 copies of *PM*, 10 copies of the *Militant*, 7 Pathfinder titles including *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution*, and one *Militant* subscription.

## Striking chocolate workers buy 'Militant'

HERSHEY, Pennsylvania—Last weekend *Militant* supporters from Brooklyn and the Garment District in New York joined distributors in the coal mining region of northeastern Pennsylvania to get the revolutionary press into the hands of fighting workers in the area. The teams went to the picket line of the 2,700 Hershey Chocolate workers who are on strike against the candy giant over the company's demand to increase the amount union members pay for

# High school librarians order Pathfinder books

BY KATY LEROUGETEL

TORONTO—Pathfinder sales representatives received an excellent response in visits to librarians in three high schools here over the past two weeks. Although none of them knew about Pathfinder beforehand, each readily agreed to receive a visit. One even stayed behind for a full hour after her regular working day to accommodate the sales rep's schedule.

All placed substantial orders of between 17 and 40 titles, ranging from *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution* by Jack Barnes and *Che Guevara Talks to Young People* to *Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State* by Frederick Engels, and titles on Palestine and Malcolm X.

One librarian picked up a pamphlet on Palestine and asked, "What would a Palestinian student think if they read this?" She ordered the title after being satisfied that it was not part of the anti-Arab propaganda prevalent today. Unlike many bookstores, librarians do not face restrictions on ordering pamphlets, since they can store them in vertical files for students' use.

All of them commented that many students are assigned projects to define political concepts and that the *Communist Manifesto* by Engels and Karl Marx and *Fascism and Big Business* by Daniel Guerin would be useful for this.

health insurance. Two strikers signed up for introductory subscriptions to the *Militant* and eight others purchased copies of the paper. Many workers expressed interest in the articles on the meat packers' union-organizing victory in Omaha, Nebraska, and the victory of coal miners at Maple Creek Mining against the company's union-busting drive.

Strikers at Hershey's invited the *Militant* campaigners into their union hall where they proudly showed off their new food bank being put together with help from the carpenters and plumbers unions and food donations from workers at the nonunion Reese's plant. Many say it could be a long fight against the candy maker. The AFL-CIO in the area is co-sponsoring a rally on to build solidarity with the strikers.

Partisans of the *Militant* also received a warm welcome from workers at the Hershey's plant in Hazleton, Pennsylvania. Although the workers in Hazleton are in a different union and are not on strike, many expressed support for their brothers and sisters on the picket line. Nine of them bought issues of the *Militant* at their afternoon shift change.

The team also sold a *Perspectiva Mundial* subscription in Hazleton, a mining town, to a Mexican-born worker at a literature table in front of the main Post Office. Two other workers in nearby Minersville purchased subscriptions to the *Militant* after meeting socialist workers who knocked on their doors to introduce the paper.

## Sales at fund-raiser for Palestine

NEWARK, New Jersey—Two socialist workers attended an Emergency Fund-raising Dinner for Palestine here on May 11, which had been well publicized on campuses in the region. About 500 people attended, a large number of whom were young. We offered the *Militant* to people as they arrived, selling four subscriptions and a dozen copies of the paper. One of the new subscribers is a young woman, originally from Liberia, who had bought a copy of the paper at the April 20 rally in Washington that drew 75,000 people. She bought a subscription right away, and encouraged her friends to get the paper. We sat with her for part of the dinner and discussed a range of questions, from the Cuban Revolution to the role of U.S. imperialism in the world.

That same weekend campaigners sold a *Militant* subscription, a *PM* subscription, and two copies of *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution* on two tables in the working-class district where we are planning to relocate the Pathfinder bookstore. This was the final weekend of campaigning for Maurice Williams, the Socialist Workers candidate for mayor of Newark, and many people stopped to take campaign literature and learn about the working-class alternative to the big-business candidates.

Stephanie Taylor, Young Socialists member in Brownsville, Texas; Betsy Farley in eastern Pennsylvania; and Naomi Craine in Newark, New Jersey, contributed to this column.

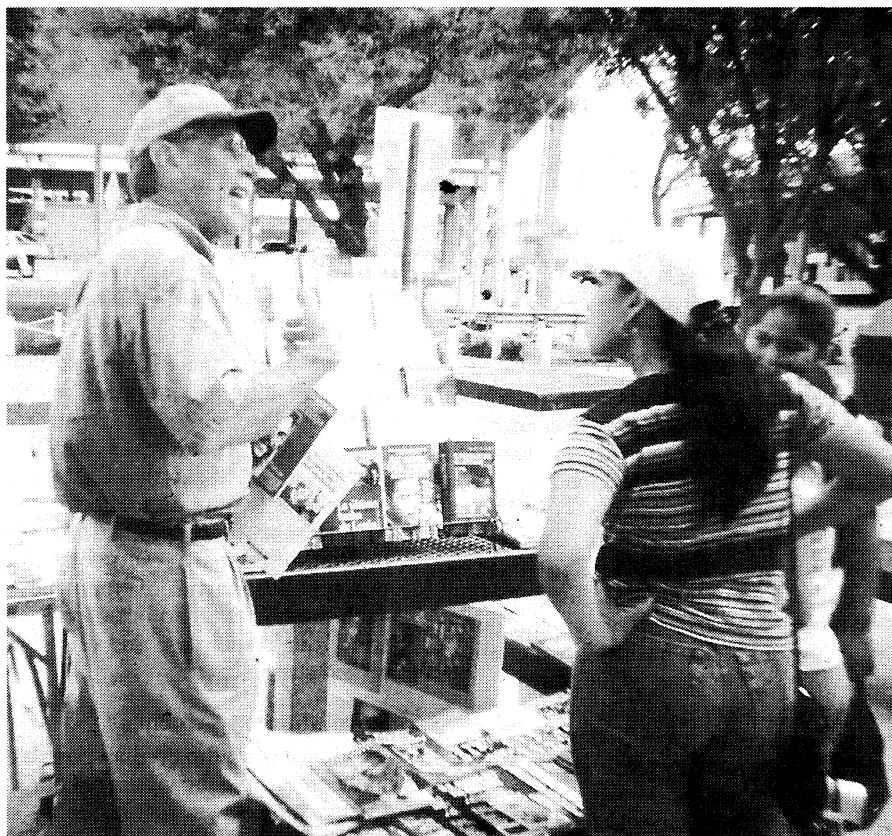
Reps have since decided to include *Socialism on Trial* by James P. Cannon in their display kits.

Explaining that a number of history courses include sections on Great Depression of the 1930s, one librarian ordered *Labor's Giant Step* by Art Preis, *Revolution and Counterrevolution in Spain* by Felix Morrow, and *Teamster Rebellion* by Farrell Dobbs. She was pleased to find titles on labor history as she is a union member herself.

With more than 100 high schools in Toronto alone, Pathfinder reps are looking forward to many more such visits.

Katy LeRougetel is a member of the Graphic Communications International Union.

AMIEU—Australasian Meat Industry Employees' Union; MUA—Maritime Union of Australia; MWU—Meat Workers Union; NDU—National Distribution Union; UFCW—United Food and Commercial Workers; UMWA—United Mine Workers of America; UNITE—Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textiles Employees



Militant/Jacque Henderson  
Socialist Workers candidate for U.S. Congress Anthony Dutrow sells *Militant* and *PM* to workers and students at campaign table in Brownsville, Texas.

## Militant/Perspectiva Mundial Subscription Drive April 13-June 23 (week 4)

Country	Militant			PM		Book	
	Goal	Sold	%	Goal	Sold	Goal	Sold
Sweden							
Gothenberg*	16	11	69%	3	2	9	6
Stockholm	10	6	60%	3	2	5	3
Sweden Total	26	17	65%	6		14	9
United Kingdom	35	15	43%	12	4	20	7
Canada							
Toronto	25	13	52%	6	2	15	8
Montreal	15	5	33%	5	3	16	9
Vancouver	30	9	30%	6	1	20	7
Canada total	70	27	39%	17	6	51	24
New Zealand							
Auckland	10	5	50%	1		5	2
Christchurch	8	2	25%	1		3	2
N.Z. total	18	7	39%	2		8	
United States							
Los Angeles	35	26	74%	15	6	10	3
Seattle	30	19	63%	12	4	16	8
Allentown*	25	14	56%	8	5	10	1
Tampa	25	14	56%	6		12	4
Brownsville	8	4	50%	3	1		3
Washington	25	12	48%	12	6	15	11
Detroit	40	19	48%	13	8	20	3
Miami	30	14	47%	15	1	15	3
Philadelphia	25	11	44%	10	3	15	1
NY Garment Dist.	80	33	41%	40	14	50	4
Cleveland	25	10	40%	5	2	20	6
Tucson	5	2	40%	1			
Pittsburgh	45	16	36%	5		20	1
Newark	55	19	35%	25	10	35	10
Brooklyn	45	15	33%	35	10	35	9
Western Colorado	18	6	33%	8	4	12	4
Twin Cities	50	14	28%	25	18	25	3
Birmingham	20	5	25%	8	4	10	3
Omaha	9	2	22%	15	8	10	1
Upper Manhattan	75	16	21%	50	16	40	8
Chicago	35	7	20%	20	6	25	8
Des Moines	40	8	20%	25	14	21	6
Houston	30	6	20%	12	3	20	8
Charlotte	18	3	17%	7	1	10	1
San Francisco	30	5	17%	18	2	15	1
Atlanta	40	6	15%	15	6	30	7
Boston	30	4	13%	15	4	20	4
U.S. total	893	310	35%	423	156	511	121
Iceland	6	2	33%	1		4	1
Australia	20	3	15%	4	2	12	2
Int'l totals	1068	381	36%	465	168	620	164
Goal/Should be	1050	420	40%	460	184	625	250

### IN THE UNIONS

	Militant			PM		Book	
	Goal	Sold	%	Goal	Sold	Goal	Sold
Canada							
UFCW	5	1	20%	1		4	2
UNITE	3		0%	2		3	
Total	8	1	13%	3		7	2
United States							
UMWA	15	2	13%	2		10	
UNITE	50	4	8%	45	4	50	1
UFCW	50		0%	50		50	
Total	115	6	5%	97	4	110	1
New Zealand							
NDU	1		0%			1	1
MWU	2		0%				
Total	3		0%			1	1
Australia							
AMIEU	3		0%			3	
MUA	2		0%			3	
Total	5		0%			6	
raised goal*							

# Fidel Castro answers U.S. slanders on biological weapons

BY GREG McCARTAN

Cuban president Fidel Castro responded in a May 10 televised speech to accusations made by U.S. undersecretary of state John Bolton that Cuba has developed biological warfare weapons.

Bolton said in a May 6 talk at the Heritage Foundation that the "United States believes that Cuba has at least a limited offensive biological warfare research-and-development effort. Cuba has provided dual-use biotechnology to other rogue states."

"We are concerned," he said, "that such technology could support BW [biological warfare] programs in those states. We call on Cuba to cease all BW-applicable cooperation with rogue states and to fully comply with all of its obligations under the Biological Weapons Convention."

Bolton's uncorroborated assertions were widely picked up by the big-business press. "The only thing true in Bolton's lies is that Cuba is 90 miles away from United States territory," said Castro in his speech. "No one has ever presented a single shred of evidence that our homeland has conceived a program to develop nuclear, chemical, or biological weapons. The doors of our institutions are open," he said. "Cuba has absolutely nothing to hide."

## U.S. official's double-talk

U.S. secretary of state Colin Powell told reporters while traveling to a NATO meeting in Iceland several days later that "we do believe Cuba has a biological offensive research capability." Backing down somewhat from Bolton's statement, Powell said, "We didn't say it actually had some weapons, but it has the capacity and capability to conduct such research."

U.S. national security adviser Condoleezza Rice reinforced the anti-Cuba slander on "The News Hour with Jim Lehrer" May 13 with a guilty-until-proven-innocent approach. "You can't show someone a biotech lab and be assured they're not creating weapons of mass destruction," she said. "That's not how biotech weapons work. And they're actually very easy to conceal and you need multiple measures to make certain biotech weapons aren't being developed and transferred."

Rice didn't mention the extent of Washington's stockpiles of chemical and biological weapons, which it stores in at least eight locations in the United States and the Johnson Atoll in the Pacific Ocean. Or that the U.S. government reserves to itself the right to develop new biological and chemical weapons under the guise that it can learn to defend its armed forces and population against potential attacks.

For example, under such a pretext the U.S. Army labs have been producing a powdered and aerosol form of anthrax since 1992. This fact was made public last De-

cember during the FBI investigation surrounding letters containing anthrax that were sent through the U.S. mail.

In his May 10 address Fidel Castro said that it's a "lie to say that Castro considers terror as a legitimate tactic for furthering revolutionary objectives," an assertion made by Bolton. "Actually, everybody knows that our revolutionary movement never used such methods that do not fit with our doctrine, our principles, and our concept of armed struggle."

## Revolutionary principles

"Never were the civilian population and innocent people the victims of our actions," Castro said of the revolutionary struggle against the U.S.-backed dictator Fulgencio Batista. "Our tactic always was to fight against heavily equipped enemy units."

Addressing Bolton's statement that during a trip to Iran last year Castro said the two countries could "bring America to its knees," the Cuban leader explained that he never made such a remark. "I did say, in one of the three speeches I made during that visit, that imperialism was bereft of ideas, that ideas are more powerful than weapons, and that one day imperialism would crumble. I also said that 'the Iranian people with heroism and not with weapons defeated the Shah,' and this showed the power of ideas."

In his speech Castro said that 34,307 Cuban medical volunteers have served "free of charge" around the world, "safeguarding the health of millions of people. Nobody in the world," he said, "could beat them in their dedication and their willingness to make sacrifices. At this very moment, 2,671 of them are working in isolated and inhospitable places in Latin America, the Caribbean, and Africa."

"It would be very difficult to persuade these men and women to produce viruses and bacteria to kill children, women, old people, or the people of any country. The pride and high moral standards of our people," Castro said, "rests on the rationality of a policy that does not contradict their ethics and principles."

The Cuban president said that laws in the country prohibit the manufacture, possession, or transportation of chemical or biological agents and that "if a Cuban scientist from any of our biotechnology institutes had been cooperating with any country in the development of biological weapons, or if he or she had tried to create them on his or her own initiative, he or she would be immediately presented in a court of justice as we would consider it an act of treason to the country."

Castro said that the "idea of destroying Cuba, an obsession that has lasted more than 43 years, has led and still leads U.S. policy down a tortuous path filled with lies, mistakes, failures, and crimes."

## Hundreds march for immigrant rights in Chicago on Cinco de Mayo



Hundreds in Chicago celebrated Cinco de Mayo, the Mexican holiday, with marches and rallies demanding unconditional amnesty for immigrants, repeal of the Supreme Court decision against immigrant labor rights, U.S. Marines out of the Puerto Rican island of Vieques, and an end to Israeli occupation of Palestine. Construction workers brought a giant rat to the rally with a sign on it saying, "Supreme Court," referring to the court's March 27 antilabor decision denying undocumented workers protections under the law during union-organizing drives.

## Poultry workers win 'doff and don' pay

Continued from front page

of pay a day, putting millions of dollars into the pockets of the corporations. Not paying workers for this preparation time also reduces their retirement benefits because contributions to their pension plan is based on the number of paid work hours.

In many cases such preparation time can run as high as 40 minutes a day as workers don the hair nets, boots, earplugs, gloves, aprons, and other equipment. On each break workers must remove the safety and sanitary equipment, then rinse, sanitize, and put it on again before going back to work.

Delmarva is the peninsula on the eastern shore of the Chesapeake Bay that includes Delaware and parts of Maryland and Virginia. It is one of the main chicken growing and processing regions in the United States.

The Labor Department has also filed suit against Tyson Foods, accusing the company of underpaying workers at its Blountsville, Alabama, plant. Tyson employs 65,000 poultry processing workers.

Tyson officials said putting on and taking off the protective equipment was nothing

more than putting on clothing, similar to a construction worker putting on a hard hat.

In a related development May 4, Delmarva chicken catchers employed by Perdue won their first union contract following a three-year fight for union recognition. The workers work at facilities in Accomac, Virginia; Georgetown, Delaware; and Salisbury, Maryland.

Chicken catchers grab chickens from the houses where they are raised and crate them for shipment. Teams of seven to 10 workers wade through warehouses lined with ammonia-soaked chicken waste to collect the birds, where dust particles and bird feathers blow around. They usually work in the middle of the night when the chickens are supposed to be more docile. The chicken catchers are paid on a piece-rate basis, ranging from \$1.86 per thousand chickens to \$2.50 per crew member per thousand chickens. They catch as many as 50,000 chickens in an 8-to-12 hour shift, lifting three and four at a time in each hand as they cram them into steel cages, trying to avoid being pecked and scratched.

Chicken catchers and forklift operators, who place the cages of chickens on the back of trucks, had approached Local 27 of the United Food and Commercial Workers Union (UFCW) seeking to be recognized as regular employees eligible for overtime and health and sick benefits, rather than independent contractors. Perdue had re-categorized these workers in 1991 as "independent contractors." The chicken catchers also launched a fight to win the back pay owed to them for overtime hours worked but never paid.

Last year, the 100 Perdue chicken catchers won their lawsuit for back overtime pay. Perdue was ordered to pay them \$1.7 million. Then in July of 2001, they voted to join the UFCW.

According to UFCW Local 27 president Buddy Mays, "It is the first-ever collective bargaining agreement to cover chicken catching crews." More than 600 people work as chicken catchers on the Delmarva peninsula. Chicken catchers and their supporters had launched an aggressive campaign for union recognition, including press conferences and leafleting outside grocery stores.

Janice Lynn is a member of UFCW Local 27 in Landover, Maryland.

## Unionists at salt mine strike to reverse concessions

BY HELEN MEYERS

CLEVELAND—Members of Teamsters Local 436 struck May 6 the Cargill Whiskey Island Salt Mine located near downtown Cleveland. The vote was 142 to 8 in favor of walking out. Pickets said they were pleased by the solidarity expressed in the strike vote, particularly from the new hires with no previous union experience. Many of these workers had been on the picket line before. In 1991 they went on strike for six months over company demands for cuts in health-care benefits. The union won that fight.

The main issue in this strike is for a five-day workweek, Monday through Friday. Gary Tiboni, president of the local, told the *Militant*, "For the last five years the workers have lived with the flexible workweek schedule. It doesn't work for our guys, especially with the families. The schedules are changed without much notice, they don't know if they will work a weekend and can't make any plans."

Cargill, Inc., a major international conglomerate, bought the mine in 1997, and

demanding a \$3-an-hour pay cut from all the workers. Because Cargill bought only the mine's assets, they were not required to honor the previous labor agreement. One year into the contract the flexible workweek was negotiated in exchange for returning the wages to the previous level.

Other issues in the strike are the use of subcontractors, who are doing work previously done by union workers, including working underground. Union members say Cargill is not respecting seniority pertaining to job openings or shift preference.

The union is also involved in a struggle around safety. Six miners recently refused to work on a job due to unsafe conditions. The company ordered them to do the work. The miners again refused and the company suspended them for three days. The union filed a grievance and was forced to take the issue to arbitration. The arbitrator ruled that the company must give the union members back pay for time lost and remove any mention of the disciplinary action from its files. He also issued a statement that said that

when miners believe their safety is in jeopardy, they have the right to refuse to do the work.

The Whiskey Island mine began operating in 1961. Two workers have died on the job, including John Kitchman, a miner who was struck in the head in 1990 by a roof slab. According to the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* at the time, Joe Zelek, deputy state mining inspector, told the Ohio State Mine Examining Board that "10 bolts in the mine roof would have been enough to prevent the accident."

The Cleveland mine is the largest producing salt mine in the United States. It is 1,800 feet underground and stretches 2.5 miles under Lake Erie. The salt is mined by building rooms with 105 square foot pillars, which are necessary to keep the 26 billion tons of rock and water from collapsing on the heads of the miners. The salt is blasted, leaving piles picked up by front-end loaders with 22-ton scoops, then dumped on a conveyor belt and sent to the surface to be crushed. The salt is used primarily for melting ice on roads.



# Attack heightens India-Pakistan conflict

Continued from front page

Islamabad and announced plans to send deputy secretary of state Richard Armitage on a similar mission within a few weeks.

Rocca called the attack "pure, naked terrorism" and said that Washington is "worried about the continued mobilization of both armies facing each other. A spark could lead to an unintended conflict."

The Indian government is demanding that Pakistan take further moves to prevent attacks on its territory. Officials claim that "cross-border infiltration is being fueled by the redeployment of Pakistan militant groups and al Qaeda fighters," reported the *Financial Times*. In Islamabad Rocca "is expected to raise the issue of U.S. counter-terrorist operations in Pakistan," the paper noted. Washington has been pressing the Pakistani regime for a free hand in sending U.S. soldiers across the Pakistan-Afghan border in pursuit of Afghan forces, something Islamabad has resisted so far.

Since 1947, when the state of Pakistan was created by the departing British imperialists as a spearhead against the Indian revolution, India and Pakistan have fought three full-scale wars. The government in Pakistan has been armed and backed by Washington for decades, and the regime in Islamabad has remained a bulwark for imperialism against the interests of working people in the region. On the Indian subcontinent it stands as an obstacle to the battle by workers and peasants to address the unfulfilled tasks of the struggle for national unification.

Founded as an explicitly Muslim state, until 1971 Pakistan was made up of two parts separated by 1,000 miles. In addition to supplying arms to this regime, Washington included Pakistan in a 1954 military pact with Turkey, the 1954 SEATO alliance in Southeast Asia, and CENTO (the Central Treaty Organization) in 1955. CENTO also included the regime of the Shah of Iran, a close ally of Islamabad until he was deposed by the Iranian revolution of 1979.

The current government of Gen. Pervez Musharraf has closely collaborated with U.S.



imperialism in its war against Afghanistan and continuing military operations there.

## Joint military exercises

The renewed tensions come as the United States and India prepare to commence their first joint military exercises in almost 40 years. The one-week operation by paramilitary and airborne troops from both countries is to be followed by joint army, naval, and air exercises later this year. U.S. navy ships have been regularly docking at Indian ports

and New Delhi has joined Washington in joint "anti-piracy" patrols of the Malacca Straits, the world's busiest shipping lane.

Since last September, when it lifted all remaining sanctions that it had imposed on India for testing a nuclear weapon in 1998, Washington has approved 20 orders by New Delhi for military equipment. This includes General Electric-manufactured engines that will power India's combat aircraft project.

"India has a lot of new money to spend and a large proportion of it will be directed

to U.S. suppliers," *Jane's Defence Weekly* reported recently. India's defense budget has been raised by 14 percent this year to \$14 billion.

The state of Jammu and Kashmir, largely Muslim in population, is located on the northern edge of the subcontinent, wedged between China, India, and Pakistan. Following the imperialists' partition of India in 1947 the Hindu maharajah of the province, backed by New Delhi, resisted popular demands for a referendum and decided to incorporate the territory into the new Indian state.

A war ensued, resulting in the division of the area between Pakistan and India. New Delhi agreed to hold a referendum on the status of the region, but later refused to allow the population to vote on the question. The government in Pakistan has since backed groups based on its soil who are fighting New Delhi. Over the past decades some organizations have called for independence, while others have demanded incorporation into Pakistan. Islamabad has favored the latter groups in its military and financial backing.

Press reports indicate that some 30,000 people have died in the conflict since 1989. In just the first four months of this year 277 civilians were killed in Jammu and Kashmir, compared with 285 in all of 2001 and 239 in 2000. Some 581 people claimed by India to be supporters of the insurgency have been killed so far this year, up from 407 in 2001.

Since January, 200 Indian soldiers have died from detonation of land mines along the border, and more than 200 Indian security forces personnel have been killed.

The conflict is one example of how the imperialist partition of India partition not only divided the subcontinent, but also helped divert the struggle against imperialism and leave working people more vulnerable to demagogic appeals by their national rulers.

## Locked out, workers at Detroit-Windsor tunnel set up pickets

BY DON MACKLE

DETROIT—Union members at the Detroit-Windsor Tunnel are maintaining daily picket lines at the Detroit entrance to the tunnel since being locked out April 24. The 29 members of Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) Local 1564 rejected a contract proposal demanding a 3.5 percent cut in salaries, a \$40 co-pay on prescriptions, and a two-tier wage system.

"The members voted the contact down 25 to 3 on April 23 and the next day at noon the company announced they were locking our members out," said local president Don Mathis.

Mark Black, an ATU member with more than 20 years working at the tunnel, was one of many members talking to motorists and handing them informational flyers as they stopped to make the turn into the tunnel. The flyers ask everyone to use the bridge to Canada until the lockout is resolved. "The company wants to hire in new people for about half of what they are paying people now to try and weaken the union," said Black. The tunnel is owned by the cities of Windsor, Canada, and Detroit, but managed by an Australian trust company as a profitable business.

"They are just trying to increase their profits. They are looking down the line because the people who work on the Canadian side are organized by the Canadian Auto Workers Union and their contract is up in January," Black said.

On May 9 several dozen workers from various unions joined the picket line for a solidarity action called by the Detroit AFL-CIO. In addition, about 150 city workers who belong to the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Workers Union briefly joined the action. The workers had just held a rally demanding a pay raise at city hall across the street from the tunnel and were on their way to a city council meeting.

The unionists do maintenance and janitorial work on the tunnel, as well as collect tolls. Bosses have been doing the work around the clock since the start of the lockout.

Don Mackle is a member of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 876.

## Grand jury indicts mine bosses for lying about safety and dust levels at mine face

Continued from Page 16

lowing mining equipment to be used without adequate ventilation. In one instance, an unnamed company official allegedly threatened to fire miners if they refused to operate two sets of mining equipment on the same intake air, a practice specifically forbidden by MSHA because miners are forced to work in heavily polluted air. In another example, the supervisors allegedly failed to use sufficient ventilation curtains to keep dust levels down.

Another allegation states that KenAmerican directed miners not to wear dust sampling devices, or collected the devices before the end of a shift, so they would not register the "excessive coal dust" in the mine.

In a prepared statement, KenAmerican president Gentry said, "These charges are the result of an overzealous prosecution driven by outside influences."

### A Robert Murray mine

KenAmerican Resources is one of the gems in the empire of Coal magnate Robert

Murray, according to a corporate profile by industry magazine *Coal Age* in 1999. The Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) is the main customer of KenAmerican.

Murray is the largest independent coal operator in the United States. Many of his mines are run nonunion. Where miners have organized into the UMW, he has forced them to take substandard contracts. Recently, after a seven-year battle, miners at his Maple Creek mine in Pennsylvania forced Murray to sign a "me too" agreement comparable to the national Bituminous Coal Operators Association (BCOA) agreement.

Gibson, one of those indicted, bragged to *Coal Age* that the mine's continuous mining supersections—a mining section with two continuous mining machines—eliminated miner helpers by giving crews hand held communications devices and forcing shuttle car operators to do double duty.

Likewise, Gentry touted KenAmerican bosses' methods when he told *Coal Age*, "Our operating style is a bit different, and so too is our management style. When we have a good month in safety, in production,

and costs, we fire up the grills outside and have a cookout at the end of the shifts. It's part of our team building, a demonstration of our appreciation for jobs well done. And it works."

The indictment comes four years after a Louisville *Courier-Journal* investigation found widespread cheating on coal dust sampling. The newspaper reported that since testing started in 1972 many samples registered so little dust they must have been falsified. As a result, miners were breathing too much dust, leading to the death of hundreds of miners a year from black lung disease.

A year later, federal officials said the number of air quality tests with suspiciously low readings had dropped dramatically. But it's unclear whether that progress has continued since 1999. MSHA coal mine inspectors issued an estimated 68,242 citations and orders in 2001, a 17 percent increase over the previous year.

### Another miner killed on the job

In a related development, coal miner George Shirley, 46, of Eighty-Four, Pennsylvania, was electrocuted and died at Consol's Eighty-Four Mine. Shirley had been operating a ram car in the mine but then stopped the car and walked around to check something at its front, according to Washington County Coroner Timothy Warco.

A co-worker then saw Shirley's mining hat fall off and saw him fall to the ground. Co-workers performed cardiopulmonary resuscitation while bringing Shirley out of the mine but were unable to revive him.

Warco said he found no injuries on Shirley's body and is continuing to investigate the cause of his death. According to a May 14 radio report, federal officials found the cause of death to be electrocution when Shirley came into contact with an overhead cable. He is listed as the 12th mining fatality in 2002. By this time in 2001 there had been eight mining deaths.

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# New frictions emerge between European imperialist powers

BY PATRICK O'NEILL

In a development that indicates the fault lines among the member countries of the European Union (EU) the French budget minister Alain Lambert has said that the deficit in his new national budget will exceed the EU guideline of 3 percent. Thanks to this, admitted Lambert, Paris would "fail to keep [its] promise" to fellow members of the European Union.

The budget includes a tax cut promoted by President Jacques Chirac that amounts to 30 billion euros over the next five years, and a substantial increase in "law and order" spending on the police and other agencies of repression. These plans would "delay the move to a balanced budget," reported the *Financial Times*.

The French rulers, along with their counterparts in the 14 other EU-member governments, had previously pledged to abide by the 1991 Maastricht treaty stipulating that budget deficits are not supposed to exceed 3 percent of Gross Domestic Product.

Paris is not the first government to be placed in this position. In February, officials in Germany—the other dominant power in the EU—successfully pressured a meeting of finance ministers to refrain from issuing an official warning about the scale of the German deficit. The budget shortfall rose to 2.7 percent this year, close to the 3 percent ceiling. The government of Portugal has also admitted that it is struggling to stay under the 3 percent limit.

## Pressures with common currency

The January 1 adoption of the euro as the official currency of 12 member governments, following a three-year phasing-in period, has tended to pose more sharply than before the tensions and contradictions inherent in a monetary union and trade bloc made up of competing capitalist powers.

For the ruling classes in the EU-member countries, the new currency brings with it the potential benefits of rationalizing and simplifying international exchanges in their ballooning trade across Europe. As the EU expands eastward to incorporate a dozen more members, the capitalist rulers are more concerned than ever with reducing the overheads and complications involved in the use of dozens of different national currencies.

From the first, however, the adoption of the euro exacerbated tensions and conflicts among the competing imperialist powers. Immediately following its roll-out in January, the Italian foreign minister resigned, saying that he was "filled with sadness" by his fellow ministers' lack of commitment to the new currency and to European integration.

Italian prime minister Silvio Berlusconi, a rightist who leads a coalition government that includes the fascist-oriented Northern League Party, said that "we remain totally committed to Europe, but we also reserve our right to defend our interests, just as the French and the Germans and the British do."

On paper, at least, the EU rules are enforced by the European Commission, made up of 20 delegates from member governments. Most countries are entitled to one representative, while Germany, France, and other larger powers qualify for two. The commissioners, who sit on top of a bureaucracy numbering 27,000 people, have the formal power to institute legal proceedings, against member states or businesses that fail to comply with EU regulations and with laws passed by the elected European parliament.

In theory, the commissioners are pledged to put EU laws and regulations before national concerns. In reality, reported the *Times*, they have tended to act "on behalf of their own national governments rather than in the interests of the European Union as a whole."

One month ago, reported the London-based daily, the governments of France, Italy, and the Netherlands instructed their representatives on the European Commission to split the body and block its attempts to outlaw tax incentives to trucking firms based on their soil. Their action dealt a significant blow to the commission's declared aim of curbing "state aid" to national enterprises.

Relations between the "unelected bureaucracy" in Brussels and the member states are in danger of deteriorating further, noted the *Times*, citing calls by the German government for "a more flexible industrial policy" and for fewer restrictions on corporate mergers. Earlier this year the Commission took the Portuguese government to court to try to reestablish a ban on subsidies for pig farmers.

The "Brussels bureaucracy" and the way its rulings can impinge on national capitalist interests have increasingly become issues in domestic politics. Rightist politicians like Jean-Marie Le Pen in France have increased their electoral following by attacking ruling parties for allegedly selling out their "national sovereignty." Le Pen has demagogically described the euro as a "currency of occupation."

Among working people confronted by a government and employer offensive on their living standards and rights, such right-wing rhetoric has at times gotten a hearing, since ruling-class attacks are frequently carried out in the name of qualifying for membership in the "eurozone."

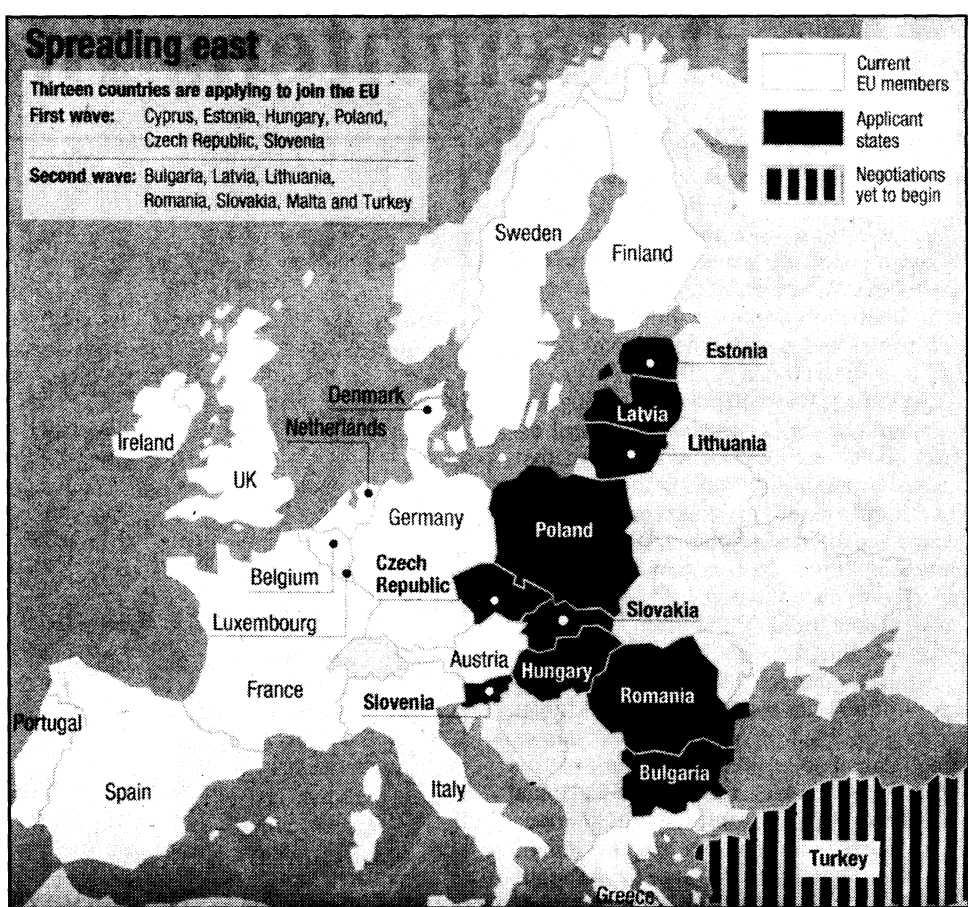
## Differential impact of economic crisis

The EU is marked by deep social and economic inequalities between the largest powers, such as France and Germany, and the more backward imperialist countries like Spain and Portugal.

Faced with the probable failure of her government to meet the EU 3 percent limit, the Portuguese finance minister, Manuela Ferreira Leite, said in early May that "the consequences of deviating from the [Maastricht] pact are far more serious for Portugal, which needs Community funds to catch up with the rest of Europe, than for countries like Germany or France. We have to take drastic action because the threat of sanctions is very real." Ferreira Leite announced "emergency measures," including an increase in the country's value-added tax from 17 percent to 19 percent, a freeze on new hiring by the government, and the closure or merger of more than 70 state institutions.

The Spanish government has raised concerns about the proposals to expand EU membership to incorporate a number of countries to the east of Germany, all of which are relatively underdeveloped. Madrid fears that with such an influx it will no longer qualify for the EU development funds of which it is the largest recipient. The funds are earmarked for countries where the per capita income is less than 75 percent of the EU average.

In May of last year, reported the *Financial Times*, the Spanish government "backed down from a bruising dispute with Germany



over Madrid's bid to link an agreement on European Union enlargement to guarantees on future regional aid."

Sinn Fein, the party that fights for Irish unification and against British rule in the north, pointed to the inequalities among the EU member states during the campaign it waged last year against the incorporation of the EU's Nice Treaty into the Irish constitution. The proposal was defeated in a June referendum.

The treaty, said Sinn Fein leader Gerry Adams, would pave the way "for the creation of a new superpower, an EU Super-state with its own army dominated by the largest countries." In the structure outlined in the document, he said, "larger states like Germany, France, Italy, and Britain automatically treble their votes in making EU laws from 2005 while small states like Ireland only double theirs. [This] is about further centralizing the EU, placing greater power in the hands of the largest states and allowing them to create a two-tier EU."

## Berlin asserts 'leadership role'

Even between France and Germany, the two most powerful imperialist powers in the EU, the member countries' voting powers have proved a bone of contention. Under a plan floated by German chancellor Gerhard Schröder last April, the European Commission would assume some governmental powers over the member states. The proposal "reflects Berlin's efforts to carve a

greater German leadership role in Europe," wrote the *International Herald Tribune*.

Under Berlin's blueprint, the limited authority of "the existing European Parliament...would command 'complete budget authority' in a move that could infuriate French champions of the union's common agricultural policy," reported the paper. "The French have fought to retain influence over farm policy and its massive subsidies, which accounts for almost half of the total EU spending." Paris is the largest recipient of these funds.

"The French are tense," said Anne-Marie Le Gloannec, the deputy director of a French social science institute in Berlin. "If the Germans speak of federalism, they will think that Europe will become Germany writ large." In May of last year French prime minister Lionel Jospin rejected the German proposals and huffed that "like many convinced Europeans, I am attached to Europe, but also to my own nation."

Indicating the chauvinist fear of German imperialist power nurtured by many in the British ruling class, one Tory MP bluntly described the German chancellor's blueprint as a "Germanic master plan."

The German-promoted proposal to expand the EU eastward, incorporating 12 new governments, has been a growing source of tension. The German rulers stand to benefit the most from this expansion, since it will permit further development of their invest-

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# Strikes rattle German bosses

## Continued from front page

walkouts on the basis that small wage increases over the past decade have failed to keep up with inflation.

IG Metall Union president Klaus Zwickel said that with turnover of 710 billion euros the employers can afford a raise.

The big-business media has warned of the danger that other unions currently engaged in separate negotiations may also strike for wage increases. The Service Employees union called a meeting for May 17 to discuss whether it would go out after rejecting a 1.7 percent increase offered by the bosses. Negotiations for wage increases for 440,000 retail workers similarly broke down in North Rhine-Westphalia. In addition, construction workers are currently in negotiation for a 4.5 increase, and printing workers held work stoppages earlier this month to press for a 6.5 percent raise.

"Wage agreements in one sector—typically metalworking, which accounts for 10 percent of German employment—set the tone for negotiations elsewhere," wrote the *Wall Street Journal*, pointing to the stakes in the metalworkers' dispute. The union's contract covers 3.6 million workers and many companies are openly threatening to walk out of the bosses' federation or move production to another country if the union persists with its wage demands.

"Whether it's 3.5 percent or 4 percent is not so important, but it's clear that the higher the wage increase, the stronger the pressure to shed labor," said Ulrich Schroeder, an

economist with Deutsche Bank AG in Frankfurt.

The German rulers have also sought to push back unemployment benefits and other social entitlements won by the German workers that have helped alleviate the impact of the economic recession for laid-off workers.

"Job protection rules have been relaxed, but it's still expensive to lay off workers," lamented the *New York Times* last February.

Because of relatively high wage levels and allegedly restrictive work rules, German companies have invested in labor-saving machinery and kept hiring to a minimum, said Hans-Werner Sinn, director of the Ifo Institute for Economic Research in Munich. "German firms cut back on their labor force by not employing people. It sounds strange, but Germany needs to create a new sector of low-wage, low-skilled jobs," he added.

German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder has come under fire because of rising unemployment figures. Last February the German daily *Bild* ran an article about the subject under the headline, "Chancellor, What Now?" Four years ago Schröder made a central theme of his election campaign the promise that he would keep the number of unemployed below 3.5 million by the next election. Last January the number of unemployed workers rose above four million. Unemployment levels have been disproportionately higher in the eastern part of Germany at 15 percent, compared with 8 percent for Western Germany.

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# U.S. imperialism's protectionist trade assault

The following excerpts from *Capitalism's World Disorder* by Jack Barnes discuss the growing competition and rivalries that mark relations among the imperialist ruling classes, including France, Germany, and the other imperialist powers that make up the European Union. The first piece is from a talk by Barnes in November 1992 entitled, "The Vote for Ross Perot and Patrick Buchanan's 'Culture War': What the 1992 Elections Revealed." The second is from "So Far from God, So Close to Orange County: The Deflationary Drag of Finance Capital," a presentation at a regional socialist educational conference held in Los Angeles over the 1994-95 New Year's weekend. Barnes is the national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party. Copyright © 1999 by Pathfinder Press, reprinted by permission. Subheadings are by the *Militant*.

BY JACK BARNES

The prospect of a breakdown in world trade is slowly but surely increasing as inter-imperialist conflict sharpens today. During this year's election campaign, Clinton competed with Perot and Buchanan to be the most aggressive-sounding candidate on questions of international trade. Clinton expressed doubts about signing the so-called North American Free Trade Agreement, at least before doing some arm-twisting and renegotiating with the Mexican and Canadian governments "to level the playing field." And Clinton's backers in the trade union officialdom, and among bourgeois political figures who are Black, such as Jesse Jackson, were among the most vociferous in opposing what they called a "fast track" of "American jobs" to Mexico.<sup>1</sup>

At the same time, U.S. imperialism's protectionist assaults against its trade rivals have bipartisan support. Just this month, for example, the Bush administration threatened to levy a 200 percent import tax on white wine and other European Community products in order to force the EC, especially the capitalists in France, to back off subsidies on soybeans and other agricultural products. These are aggressive, unilateral acts by Washington. They will be repeated in one form or another over and over again. The U.S. rulers' European rivals may well back off this time, but crises like this will recur in the deflationary, depression conditions the capitalist world has entered. The stability and the patterns of world trade will be threatened. No one is in control of the pressures that erupt in these conflicts. Unilateral acts are taken in reaction to the perceived national interests of powerful capitalist classes that come into conflict with the national interests of competing capitalist classes. No one plans these clashes, and no one can ultimately prevent them.

No one plotted six months ago, for example, that a dispute over soybean oil would pose a threat to patterns of world trade that have been built up by the capitalist powers through negotiations since the end of World War II. But the conflict shaping up between Washington and Paris and other European imperialist powers is no joke. Carla Hills, the chief U.S. trade representative, is standing in front of TV cameras and saying, in essence, "Cheat us on soybeans and we'll

zap your white wine!"

Why is all this happening? The big-business media offers an explanation. From reading the papers and watching TV, you would think the dispute is about farmers. The problem is that farmers are being voraciously greedy—especially dirt farmers in France, who are portrayed as having more power than any social force on earth. They have supposedly pushed the entire French government to the wall. They have the European Community on the run. Working farmers in France, some of whom can barely eke out a living, are threatening to bring world trade to its knees!

## Big stakes in agricultural trade conflicts

But this is all demagogic camouflage. The dispute over soybeans and white wine is a direct conflict between some of the most powerful interests of rival national capitals—not a clash between debt-burdened independent commodity producers on opposite sides of the Atlantic Ocean. France is today the number-two exporter of farm products in the world, following the United States. The profits are raked in by giant French commercial trusts that monopolize trade and banking both—not by working farmers. U.S. capitalists are the world's largest traders of soybeans, accounting for close to 63 of the 86 million tons produced worldwide. So, there are big stakes for some of the largest monopolies in both countries.<sup>2</sup>

Moreover, the threatened tax on imported wine is less an assault on the French-ruling class than it is a broadside by both Washington and London against the German ruling class, Paris's partner in the conflict. We should not forget what Bonn did a month or so ago. In September, the world's financiers, including those in Germany, decided to treat the pound sterling like a two-bit overvalued currency and crammed it down the Tory government's throat. That was after finance capital had squeezed the pound for years, helping to precipitate the deepest and most prolonged recession in Britain since the Great Depression of the 1930s, one it is just now beginning to come out of. The German government and banks, however, teamed up with the French rulers to prevent the same thing from happening to the French franc. So, when Wall Street and Washington take aim at Paris over trade and financial policy, they often have locked Bonn in the cross hair as well.

These conflicts between rival national capitalist classes and governments are blowing apart the myth of a "united Europe" at an accelerating pace. Since the end of the so-called Cold War, bourgeois politicians and commentators have had trouble coming up with phrases to describe the world balance of power. They talked about a New World Order for awhile, but that did not seem to fit so well in light of the outcome of the Gulf War, the permanent crises in Eastern Europe and the former USSR, and the onset of depression conditions. So some of them began talking about "the tripolar world"—the United States, Europe, and Japan were the three poles. But that description of power relationships in today's world has already bumped up against a big problem—there is no Europe pole.

How long ago was it that many ruling-class figures in Europe (especially in Bonn, and to



Farmers in France demand payment for herds hit by 'mad cow' disease, December 2000. Barnes explains that the big-business media scapegoats these working farmers for growing trade disputes between Washington and Paris that are rooted in crisis of capitalism and growing inter-imperialist competition.

a lesser degree Paris) were insisting that the European imperialist powers—whatever their problems and frictions—were on the road toward political unity? Members of the European Community would pool their funds—so the story went—and give some money to Ireland, to Portugal, to Greece, and even a little bit to Spain, so these countries could catch up and narrow the economic and social gap with the rest of capitalist Europe. They would adopt common social welfare rules, labor standards, and pollution controls. Eventually they would converge toward a common foreign and military policy. They would smooth out differences in productivity and eventually all agree to use the same tokens as a common currency. And then, this new and united Europe—with class differences slowly but surely disappearing for all practical purposes—would emerge big, powerful, and competitive with the United States and Japan.

The opposite has actually happened over the last decade, however. Despite all the talk about unity, the evolution of world capitalism has increased uneven development across Europe and made its character more explosive. And not just between the weakest capitalist powers in southern Europe and the rest. The gap has also widened, for example, between rates of capital accumulation and economic development in Britain and other, more powerful capitalist countries in Europe.<sup>3</sup>

With official unemployment at around 12 percent in France, the same kind of anti-immigrant scapegoating is on the rise there that we hear from Patrick Buchanan here in the United States. "Save American jobs!" "Save French jobs!" Just as in the United States, such nationalist demagoguery is on the increase in France, including in the officialdom of the social democratic- and Stalinist-led parties and unions.

The French rulers are also continuing to press their defense of the *franc fort*—that is, keeping interest rates high in order to keep the franc strong, pegged to the German mark. That deflationary policy puts the squeeze on anybody who works for a living in France or who needs a job, whatever their national origin. But it serves the class interests of most of those who own and control wealth, and all of those who own bonds and hold debt.

## Borders more valued than ever

National boundaries are more important to the bourgeoisie today than at any time in history, just as they are becoming more porous than ever before. Forget the hoopla about European unity, the North American Free Trade Agreement, the World Trade Organization, and the United Nations. To the most powerful ruling families of world finance capital, borders are becoming more important, not less.

Why? Because national boundaries mark off two things the capitalist rulers need in order to maximize their wealth and protect it in face of rising competition.

One, boundaries define currencies. The borders of France define the area in which the franc is legal tender, backed by the full faith and credit of the state. The French bourgeoisie's effort to keep the franc strong is important if they are to keep capital flow-

ing into their coffers, not out.

Second, boundaries define the home base of the bourgeoisies' armed forces. The French army stands behind the franc; that is the power that makes the franc more than a piece of paper when push comes to shove. French bankers do not want a devalued franc when it comes time to collect on their loans; the bourgeois state and its armed forces are the ultimate collection agency. It defends French finance capital against its rivals around the world and against the effrontery of working people from Paris to Rwanda, from Lyons to Martinique and Guadeloupe, and from New Caledonia to Marseilles.

The greatest single contradiction in world politics is the internationalization of both capital and labor, on the one hand, and, on the other, the growing conflicts among the most powerfully armed nation-states as a result of intensifying competition for profits. Marx and Engels explained this fundamental contradiction of capitalism many years ago, and Lenin and the Bolsheviks taught us why these conflicts are much more explosive and much more devastating for working people in the imperialist epoch.

We might look at the wars that have been fought in recent years and initially think: well, these all seem to be conflicts between imperialist powers and colonial countries, as in the Gulf War; or between big powers and oppressed peoples, as in Moscow's assault against Chechnya; or civil wars between rival ruling groups in colonial countries or weaker workers states, as in Angola or in Yugoslavia. If we look a little more carefully, however, we can also see the mounting social tensions in world politics that lead to growing nationalist demagoguery and rightist movements in the imperialist countries. We can see the class polarization that can and will fuel the war party—the nonpartisan bourgeois war party—in all the centers of finance capital. And we can recognize the threat of inter-imperialist armed conflicts and wars that can set humanity on the path toward a world conflagration.

<sup>1</sup>After wresting further concessions from Ottawa and Mexico City, Clinton did put NAFTA on the "fast track" for ratification by Congress, which did so in a bipartisan vote in November 1993; the trade agreement took effect in January 1994. Opposition to NAFTA also cut across bourgeois party lines, involving forces on the far right of the Republican party such as Buchanan; much of the so-called labor-liberal-civil rights coalition in the Democratic Party; and Perot and his supporters.

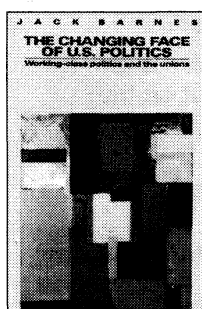
<sup>2</sup>The U.S. government withdrew its threatened import tax later in November 1992, when Washington wrested a concession from the European Community—over protests by Paris—on cuts in EC agricultural subsidies. In mid-1995 Washington threatened to impose a 100 percent import tax on thirteen models of Japanese-made automobiles until Tokyo agreed to "voluntary" quotas increasing the purchase of U.S.-made auto parts.

<sup>3</sup>According to a study reported in the May 14, 1996, issue of the London *Financial Times*, total manufacturing output in the United Kingdom between 1973 and 1992 grew by only 1.3 percent, compared to 16.5 percent in France, 32.1 percent in West Germany, and 68.6 percent in Italy. Over the same period, industrial output expanded by 68.9 percent in Japan and 55.2 percent in the United States, according to the same study.

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# Crisis deepens in Israel as Palestinians resist

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

The ongoing resistance of the Palestinian people is leading to a deepening political crisis for the Israeli rulers, with some top government officials and generals disagreeing over whether to carry out a military assault on the Gaza Strip. At the same time Prime Minister Ariel Sharon was rebuffed by the central committee of his own Likud party after a majority of its members passed a resolution against his wishes that vowed to never allow a Palestinian state to come into existence in the West Bank and Gaza.

There are also growing rifts within the Israeli population over what stance to take toward the two territories that remain under the domination of colonial-settler Israel. A huge protest demanding the Israeli rulers withdraw from the West Bank and Gaza took place in Tel Aviv May 11. The organizers estimated the crowd to be 100,000 people and the cops said there were 50,000 present. The action, organized by the Peace Now movement, was the largest such demonstration in 20 years, when 200,000 people turned out in 1982 to call for an Israeli military pullout from Lebanon.

Banners at the action reflected the axis of the protest to be within the framework of defending the existence of the Israeli state. Many read, "Leave the territories for the sake of Israel" or "Two states for two peoples." This action occurs as the list of Israeli reservists expressing opposition to serving in the West Bank and Gaza continues to grow. Despite such demonstrations of opposition, Sharon's popularity in the aftermath of his government's military assault and occupation of cities in the West Bank remains high among Israeli citizens.

## Planned assault on Gaza

After a suicide bombing attack killed 15 Israelis at a gambling resort in the coastal town of Rishon Lezion, about 15 miles south of Tel Aviv, as Sharon was meeting in Washington with President George Bush, the Israeli prime minister put into motion plans for a large-scale retaliatory strike into the Gaza Strip. Additional military reservists were called up as troops and tanks massed outside the Gaza border.

Sharon, in remarks to the press before de-

## Demonstrations in Australia support struggle of the Palestinians

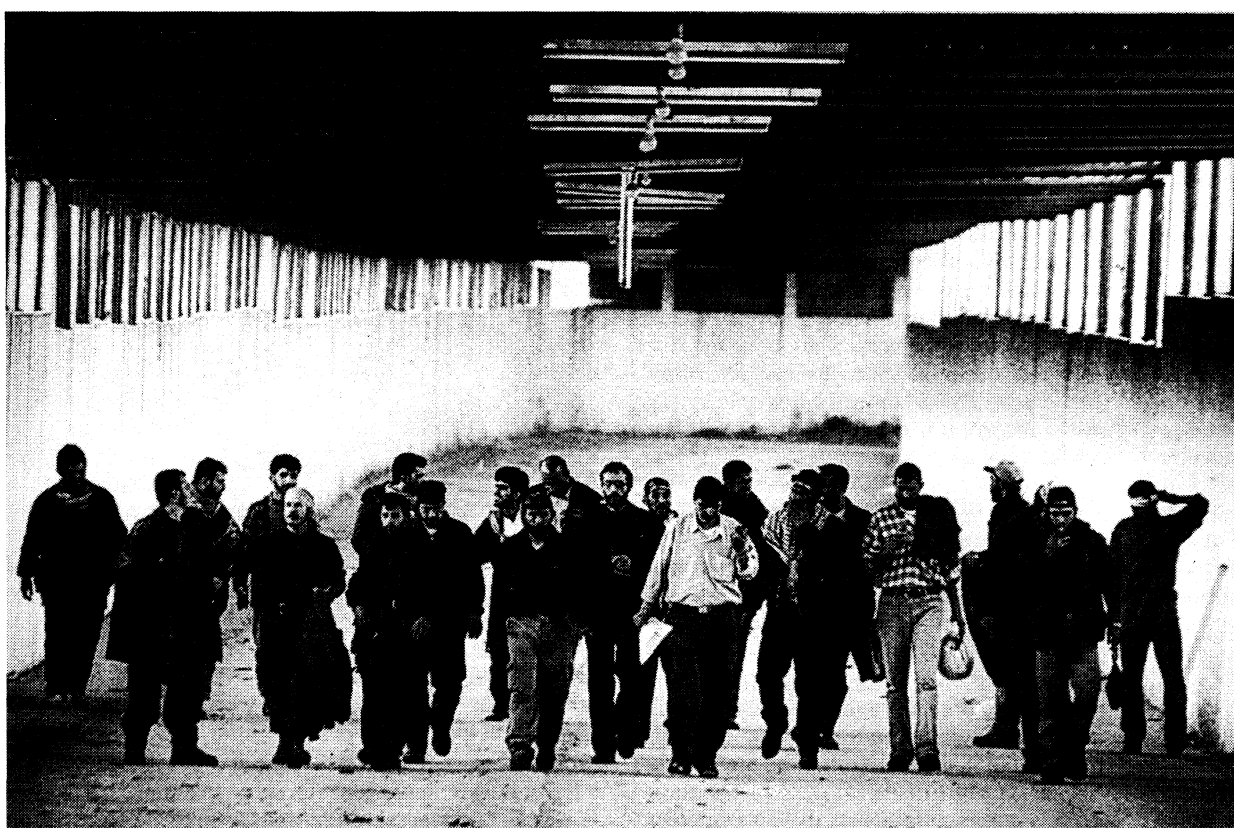
BY LINDA HARRIS

SYDNEY, Australia—Chanting "Free, Free Palestine!" and "Justice Yes! Sharon No! Israeli troops out of Palestine!" some 300 women marched here on May 4. Organized by a group of women who are active in the Palestine Human Rights Campaign, the demonstration drew representation from different backgrounds and communities. Speakers at the rally included Palestinian, Aboriginal, Bosnian, and Jewish people, who denounced the destruction in Jenin and expressed their support for the Palestinian struggle.

A number of men joined the disciplined action at the rear as participants marched past the Israeli consulate and headed to a rally outside the U.S. consulate.

This demonstration was one of a number that have taken place in Sydney over the last five weeks. In the first of these around 750 people rallied at the Israeli Consulate on April 1. Five days later, in the largest action to date, more than 4,000 people assembled at the Sydney Town Hall and marched to the U.S. and then the Israeli consulates. A large component of these demonstrations comprised young people of Palestinian and Lebanese heritage. Similar protests occurred in other cities around Australia.

Linda Harris is a member of the Australasian Meat Industry Employees' Union.



Palestinians freed when the Israeli siege of a Bethlehem church was lifted make their way to the Gaza Strip through the Erez crossing. Returning fighters have been welcomed as heroes by crowds of Palestinians.

parting from Washington, made clear that his intention was to continue with the same kind of assault he unleashed against Palestinian cities in the West Bank in April. He said the military repression will continue until "those who believe that they can make gains through the use of terrorism will cease to exist."

Despite Sharon's tough talk, however, the Israeli military was split on whether to strike at Gaza, reported the Israeli daily newspaper *Ha'aretz*. Of greatest concern was the intense fighting they knew their troops would face once they moved into Gaza from Palestinians who have been preparing and organizing to resist.

With some 1.2 million people crammed into a 140 square mile area—twice the size of Washington, D.C.—the Gaza Strip is one of the most densely populated areas in the world. The entire strip has been fenced in by the Israeli rulers and encompasses Palestinian refugee camps. Some 6,000 Israeli settlers have established "settlements" there, which are little more than provocative military outposts the government can "defend" and use to justify repeated incursions into the Palestinian camps.

In the Jabaliya Refugee Camp, which houses an estimated 101,000 people in less than half a square mile, Palestinian fighters have piled up sandbags and stones in the roadways in preparation for the expected Israeli attack. "One Palestinian," reported CNN, "said they would return to plant land mines in the sandbags if Israeli forces began moving into Gaza."

"The Israelis are stronger than us with their F-16 planes and American tanks," stated Ziad Abu Ahmad, a naval police captain employed by the Palestinian Authority in Gaza. "But we must fight them here and we will." The Egyptian government, whose territory also borders Gaza, warned the Israeli rulers against undertaking any military incursions into the area.

After a 39-day military occupation of Bethlehem, a West Bank city of 140,000 people, Israeli forces withdrew May 10 to the city's outskirts. The move came after an agreement was reached to send 13 Palestinian fighters who had been holed up in the Church of the Nativity into exile in Europe and 26 others were sent to the Gaza Strip. Some 125 people were under siege inside the church by Israeli forces during the entire time.

Upon arriving in Gaza City, the 26 Palestinian fighters received a hero's welcome from crowds that gathered around the bus bringing them into town. "Give us some guns and we will defend Gaza too," shouted one of the fighters from inside the bus, making clear that the Israeli military assault directed at them in Bethlehem just stiffened their determination to resist.

One of these fighters, 22-year-old Moaed al-Janazrab, responding to a comment that Israeli officials still consider him a wanted man, said, "All the Palestinians are wanted. Who is not wanted?"

In a move instigated by former prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who is seeking to take over the reigns of the Likud party from Sharon, the party's central committee

overwhelmingly adopted a resolution declaring, "No Palestinian state will be established west of the Jordan River."

At a raucous seven-hour meeting of the party body, Sharon had proposed that the group cancel any ballot on Palestinian statehood. The vote against Sharon's motion was 669 to 465. The Israeli leader, "apparently stunned by his defeat, walked out of the hall," reported the *Washington Post*.

## Washington dictates to Palestinians

Sharon, for his part, has made clear that he sees no prospect for a Palestinian state anytime soon, at least not until the Palestinian Authority is "reformed" to his liking and without Yasir Arafat. "We do not deal at all with the Palestinian state now," he said. "It does not stand on the agenda of the day." This position is at odds with that put forward by President Bush, whose stated position is in favor of the creation of some sort of "Palestinian state," provided the Palestinian Authority meets Washington's dictates to crack down on Palestinian resistance fighters and accepts a patchwork of unconnected towns and cities as the geographic makeup of the country.

Shortly after Bush's White House meeting with Sharon, the *New York Post* in its May 9 edition ran a banner headline story titled: "Arafat's Out: No peace talks until he loses all power, Bush says." The president denied that this is what he had discussed with Sharon in their joint meeting.

"It's not an accurate reflection of what went on in the Oval Office," asserted Bush. "What is an accurate reflection of my opinion is that Mr. Arafat has let the Palestinian people down. He hasn't led. And as a result the Palestinians suffer."

## Mideast conference

The Bush administration is seeking to hold a conference on the Mideast this summer where leaders of the Israeli government together with rulers from some capitalist regimes in the Mideast can agree upon a "solution" to impose upon the Palestinian people that will undoubtedly fall far short of their right to return to their land.

Top officials from Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Syria, who were meeting at a recent regional summit meeting, agreed the U.S.-planned ministerial conference "would be meaningless unless the Bush administration defined when and how a Palestinian state would be established," reported the *Financial Times*. They insist that this meeting must lay the groundwork for

a final settlement that must be based on an Israeli withdrawal to 1967 border lines, as proposed by the Saudi Arabian rulers.

"The U.S. has said it backs a Palestinian state. We're just asking that it says it now with a bit more clarity, something like: a Palestinian state within three years with 1967 borders except for minor adjustments," stated one of these government officials, as reported in the *Times*.

Crown Prince Abdullah of Saudi Arabia has also raised the possibility that his government would not attend this conference if it does not include representatives from Syria and Lebanon.

Meanwhile, Israeli forces continue their incursions into West Bank towns, targeting individuals for assassination and detention. In the northern town of Tulkarem on May 11, Israeli troops destroyed the four-story home of Abdel Basset Odeh, the Hamas member who had carried out a suicide bomb attack in the Israeli coastal resort of Netanya. "The soldiers demolished Odeh's home with explosives, making about 21 of Odeh's relatives homeless," reported the *Washington Post*. "A three-story building next door was also badly damaged by the demolition, forcing several dozen residents to leave it, a Palestinian official said."

Three days later Israeli forces killed two men they had targeted in a car in the village of Halhoul, north of Hebron. A dozen others were arrested in two other villages near Tulkarem.

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# U.S. rulers target airport workers for harassment

BY ROLLANDE GIRARD

SAN FRANCISCO—Airport workers—particularly those who are immigrants—are being targeted by the U.S. government as part of its antiunion offensive, carried out under the guise of “fighting terrorism.” These attacks sharply pose the need for the labor movement to defend the unity of the entire working class, “documented” or “undocumented,” and to reject any hiring discrimination against workers who are defined as “noncitizens” by the capitalist rulers of this country.

Under the Aviation and Transportation

spector general of the Transportation Department Kenneth Mead claimed that tests in several airports around the country found that the screeners overlooked knives 70 percent of the time, guns 30 percent, and simulated explosives 6 times out of 10.

The security checks at airports are not aimed at stopping contraband or terrorists; rather, they are designed to get working people used to the militarization of everyday life. This includes the deployment of 8,000 National Guard troops nationwide at 435 airports. In California, 800 guards patrol the 30 airports statewide.

Speakers at the meeting presented a number of proposals. They urged that priority be given to hiring those among the present screeners who are U.S. citizens; that the processing of citizenship applications of present-day screeners who are not citizens be expedited; and that legal permanent residents who have sworn that they intend to become U.S. citizens be hired as “provisional” employees. The government, they said, should provide funding for job training for those who don’t fit into these categories.

The several dozen screeners present read a pledge “to work for the safety and security of all people” and promised “allegiance to the people of the United States of America.”

The attacks upon airport workers are part of the U.S. rulers’ assault on the living and working conditions and rights of all working people. The aim of these actions is not to protect the public, but to use the “fight against terrorism” to attack workers’ rights and weaken the labor movement.

In early May, Homeland Security director Thomas Ridge disclosed that plans are under review by the Bush administration to link the expiration dates of visas and drivers’ licenses assigned to immigrants. The measure would establish computer links between state departments of motor vehicles and the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), enabling the sharing of immigration records.

Several congressmen have also recently submitted legislation to standardize state-issued drivers’ licenses across the United States—a step toward a national ID card.

## INS airport sweep

In the month of March alone the INS arrested more than 250 airport workers nationwide on immigration charges. Another 140 were detained recently in Washington, D.C. They were working for private companies as food handlers, janitors, luggage loaders and other service employees.

The INS sweep of airport workers is part of “Operation Tarmac,” which was launched



Militant /Rollande Girard

**Demonstration in San Jose, California, April 28 in defense of immigrants’ right to obtain drivers’ licenses. Recent move by U.S. rulers to harass and fire airport workers who are not citizens is an attack against union rights of all working people.**

a few weeks after the events of September 11. Under this operation, the immigration and criminal records of all airport contract workers have been reviewed. Some of the 212 people arrested by March 27 were permanent residents with felony criminal convictions, while others have been accused of using fake birth dates and social security numbers on job applications. Some were deported and others were convicted of immigration violations. At least 12 face federal prosecution for document fraud or related offenses. INS officials have admitted that none of those rounded up have any links to “terrorist” groups.

Sharon Rummery, a spokeswoman for the INS, asserted, “The idea is to help ensure the safety of the traveling public.” She added, “These are people that don’t have a legal right to live or work in the United States. They might be compromised because of immigration problems they have.”

This INS operation comes on top of the FBI background check of all airline employees’ records. The federal cops’ search for felony convictions within the past 10 years has also resulted in firings.

Such snooping operations are aimed at weakening the entire working class, an increasing section of which is comprised of immigrants.

A recent study by the Pew Hispanic Center reports that almost a quarter of those working in private households in this coun-

try are undocumented, along with half the country’s farm workers and 9 percent of restaurant employees. The study estimated that there are 5.3 million undocumented workers in the United States today.

The U.S. ruling class is not trying to get rid of these workers and other immigrants. On the contrary, the capitalists need them to work in their fields and factories. What they aim to do is to permit them fewer rights and to impose second-class status on them, to keep them vulnerable to being superexploited. This divide-and-rule approach weakens the union movement as a whole and should be fought by all workers.

This is why we need to demand equal rights for immigrants and to reject the idea that citizenship should be a requirement in any workplace. Struggles like that of the workers fighting for a driver’s license for all help to point the way forward.

The labor movement must wage a fight to defend the rights of all workers, whether U.S.-born or not; we must demand a reduction in the workweek without cuts in pay, and an increase in the minimum wage to union scale. Ultimately, workers and farmers need to take power out of the hands of the capitalist rulers, and establish a workers and farmers government that will put human needs before profits.

*Rollande Girard is a garment worker at Ben Davis in San Francisco.*

## AS I SEE IT

Security Act, signed by President George Bush last November, the 28,000 baggage screeners at airports across the country are about to lose their jobs. Currently employed by contractors, mostly for low wages, some will be rehired under federal jurisdiction. The law stipulates that all baggage screeners must be U.S. citizens by Nov. 19, 2002. Nationwide about 15 percent to 25 percent of the screeners are noncitizens. At the San Francisco airport, 80 percent of the more than 1,000 people employed as screeners are noncitizens. The majority are Filipinos.

This issue was the topic of discussion at an April 21 meeting held in San Francisco titled “Justice for Immigrant Airport Security Screeners and Safety for Passengers.” Sponsored by the Bay Area Organizing Committee, the meeting drew 800 people.

Among those introduced at the event were the mayors of San Francisco, South San Francisco, and Daly City; representatives of the governor’s office and state government agencies such as the Employment Development Department; the leaders of several churches; and representatives of unions including locals of the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees, Service Employees International Union, and the Teamsters.

Although the speakers defended the airport screeners’ right to their jobs, they accepted the framework that the “flying public” must be protected by “experienced” screeners who are also U.S. citizens.

To justify its attacks, the government has worked overtime to flood the media with stories portraying these immigrant workers as incompetent and as susceptible to aiding terrorist attacks. A recent report by the in-

# Socialist candidate in Houston files for ballot status

BY STEVE WARSHALL

HOUSTON—Socialist Workers congressional candidate Anthony Dutrow filed more than 1,700 signatures May 9 with the secretary of state in Austin, Texas, the capital city, to qualify for the November general election ballot. During the petitioning drive campaign supporters collected more than three times the legal requirement of 500 signatures, winning backing from working people and youth in the Houston area.

After the filing, Dutrow and several supporters headed to the Rio Grande Valley to discuss the campaign with workers, farmers, and young people there. “Working people in the valley are facing a deepening social and economic crisis,” the candidate explained. “Unemployment and plant closings such as the bosses at Levi-Strauss are carrying out at two plants in the area, a water shortage, lack of access to health-care facilities, cop brutality, and brownouts from poor maintenance of the power grid are all part of the daily reality of life in the Rio Grande Valley.”

During the campaign swing through the Brownsville-San Benito area, socialist workers sold the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* at plant gates and in working-class neighborhoods, and they set up a literature table at the International Bridge connecting the United States and Mexico.

“They blame Mexico for everything,” Jose Antonio Castro told Dutrow. “But it’s all the same land...it was all Mexico. Now there are 30 million Mexicans living here.” To illustrate his point he picked up a handful of dirt and let it slowly fall to the ground through his fingers, “Look. It’s the same

land, same water, same people. These conflicts don’t make any sense to us.”

Gracie, also from the same neighborhood, is employed on the city’s waterfront where she works in the holds of ships hooking up loads. She told socialist workers that the bosses cut her wages from \$17.50 to \$9.50 per hour. New hires start at \$7.50 and have to work 400 hours before they get a raise to the \$9.50 rate. The trouble started when a union-busting company set up shop in the 1990s, giving unionized firms leverage to demand wage concessions from the union.

“My husband is also a longshoreman, but we have trouble making ends meet,” she said. “We have no health insurance of any kind on the job. Without my mother-in-law’s house to live in, we would be out in the street.”

In a discussion with young supporters of the campaign Dutrow explained what was behind the jobs crisis. “Contrary to what the bosses and capitalist politicians tell us, these plant closings have nothing to do with other countries stealing jobs,” Dutrow said. “It has everything to do with corporate greed and the capitalist profit drive. The bosses and their government twist this to justify chauvinism and more protectionist legislation. For workers, however, the answer lies in a fight against the employers to defend our rights and living standards.”

The campaigning in Austin and Brownsville capped off a week of petitioning efforts to go over the goal of 1,500 signatures. Supporters of the campaign targeted working-class districts near the local Pathfinder Bookstore, college campuses, and meatpacking factory gates as they wrapped up the signature drive.

Many people in the workers district expressed interest in the campaign’s program in defense of workers’ rights. One of these, a sewing machine operator, joined in the discussion at the campaign table, relaying her experiences in trying to form a union at the laundry where she worked.

## Sales of revolutionary books

Isabel, a worker in the same neighborhood, stopped by the campaign table as the socialists were setting up. After signing the petition she studied various revolutionary books and pamphlets published by Pathfinder Press that were part of the literature display. She invited the socialist workers to meet with her at home later in the afternoon and decided to purchase a subscription to *Perspectiva Mundial* along with *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution*, *Socialism and Man in Cuba*, and several other titles.

Another worker originally from Mexico joined with the socialist workers for a day of campaigning. He introduced the campaign to fellow Spanish-speaking workers. “This candidate is a worker running for office from a workers party,” he would say. “And these books give you an idea of what we can do to get rid of capitalism and imperialism.” He signed up for a subscription to *Perspectiva Mundial* and stocked up on books, including *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution*, *The Revolution Betrayed*, and *In Defense of Marxism*, the latter two by Leon Trotsky, while he was encouraging others to do likewise.

Dozens of people bought copies of the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* during the

petition drive. Nine bought subscriptions to the socialist publications and eight bought copies of *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution* at campaign tables and at Militant Labor Forum discussions during the drive.

## Interest among GIs

During the last weeks of petitioning, campaigners reported that a number of GIs were beginning to discuss the politics of the campaign and add their names to the petition. One member of the armed forces told a supporter, “Let me sign that. I know all about it. I just got back from Kuwait.” Another young reservist approached by a petitioner asked to take a campaign flyer to read before he would decide if he wanted to sign. He returned about two hours later and asked the petitioner, “OK, this is nice, but how are you going to do it?” After the petitioner explained the campaign’s views about the need for a revolutionary struggle to fight for a workers and farmers government he decided to sign.

“People signed for different reasons,” explained Stephanie Taylor, a member of the Young Socialists in Texas. “A lot of students I talked with thought that Dutrow ought to have a ‘fair chance’ to be on the ballot. Others told me they were familiar with the Socialist Workers Party and had signed to get them on the ballot before. Many people were interested in the campaign’s views on voting rights for noncitizens. I met a lot of people from other countries. I gave them campaign flyers and invited them to the Militant Labor Forum.”

*Jacquie Henderson contributed to this article.*

# Coal bosses' greed adds to flood disaster

Continued from front page

Haden unfairly denying black lung benefits to coal miners. One Marrowbone miner asked: "What's the point of having mountains if you can't afford to live here?"

Not everyone sees it in those terms. Many residents of coalfield towns, including some members of the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) and retirees, believe the way coal bosses carry out mountaintop removal mining, as well as the clear-cut lumbering practices of forestry companies, are motivated by callous greed. They point out that these measures pose a big threat to the environment and to the people living in the mining towns.

As the Bush administration was issuing its ruling, six people died and 500 homes and businesses were damaged or destroyed by another round of flooding in southern West Virginia. The federal government declared the hardest hit counties—McDowell, Mercer, Mingo, and Wyoming—a federal disaster area.

In Fort Gay, West Virginia, Mayor Lawrence Thompson revealed that during the flooding several million gallons of coal slurry, known as blackwater, spilled into the Tug Fork of the Big Sandy River. This is the third time coal sludge from a coal mine has polluted his town's drinking water in as many years, he angrily complained.

Judy Bonds of the Coal River Mountain Watch in Whitesville, West Virginia, told the *Militant* that during the recent flood a "river of black water ran through the town of Welsh." There was a problem with a decant pipe and with old works at a nearby mine, she explained.

Devastating floods are a regular occurrence in the coal mining areas of West Virginia. Last summer alone, four floods left

thousands homeless and over a \$100 million in damage in their wake. Twenty-four of the state's 55 counties were declared disaster areas last summer. Parts of West Virginia have been declared federal flood disaster zones 29 times since 1967. Eight of those declarations included McDowell County.

Floods such as those last summer fueled opposition among working people to how many of these companies carry out their operations, leading to a spate of lawsuits against more than a dozen mining and logging companies.

Just about everyone agrees that mining and timbering affect runoff and have an impact on flooding. In a pristine state, forest floors soak up rain and slow runoff. Vast amounts of water are "transpired" back into the air through plant leaves. Removing this natural cover in a mountainous area like West Virginia quickens the cascade into the valleys.

The debate is over the extent to which mining and logging contribute to the damage.

Last year Kentucky coal boss William Caylor said, "Mother Nature is to blame."

But an Army Corps of Engineers preliminary report revealed that the way mining companies currently carry out mountaintop removal and other strip mining operations tends to make flooding more likely.

At one of Arch Coal Inc.'s mines, for example, it was found that runoff was increased by 3 percent at one valley fill, 13 percent at another, and at still another runoff was increased by a whopping 42 percent.

Every strip mine permit is supposed to include explicit flood runoff protections. For 12 years West Virginia regulators, under pressure by mining and logging bosses, resisted federal requirements. The state did not require a flood risk study until the fall of 2000.

In a May 8 opinion column piece in the *Charleston Gazette*, Robert Douglas, a local attorney, wrote that "underregulated surface mining and radical logging practices in West Virginia have created a monster." He said that the state imposes a tax on harvested timber, which is the chief source of funding for the Division of Forestry. "Politicians have granted safe harbor and secret super tax credits to Georgia-Pacific, Weyerhaeuser, Allegheny Wood Products,



Mine slurry pond in Kentucky that broke in October 2000, sending 250 millions gallons of water tainted with coal dust and toxic chemicals into water streams. The way coal bosses carry out mountaintop removal mining poses a threat to environment.

et al." This results in a diminished tax base and insufficient funding to hire enough forestry inspectors.

"During a nine-month inspection period in 1999, 703 logging operations were out

of compliance and 208 failed to reclaim the area where they had cut trees. The net result is the rape of our mountains and the subsequent flood destruction to the citizens below," Douglas wrote.

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**Ten Years After the L.A. Rebellion: The Fight for Black Rights Today.** Fri., May 24, 7:30 p.m. 4229 S. Central Avenue. Tel: (323) 233-9372.

#### San Francisco

**Why Iraq and Other "Rogue States" Remain in the Gunsights of U.S. Imperialism.** Fri., May 17, 7:30 p.m. Dinner at 6:30 p.m.

**What the Vote in France Reveals about the Crisis of Capitalist Parties.** Fri., May 24, 7:30 p.m. Both events at 3926 Mission St. Donation: \$5. Tel: (415) 584-2135.

### COLORADO

#### Craig

**U.S. Government Frame-Up of Cuban Revolutionaries is an Attack on All Working People.** Sat., May 25, 6:00 p.m. 6 West Victory Way. Tel: (970) 826-0289.

### MICHIGAN

#### Detroit

**The Jewish Question: Why It's Wrong to Scapegoat Jews for the Problems of Capitalism.** Speaker: Ellen Berman, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., May 24, 7:30 p.m. 4208 W. Vernor. Tel: (313) 554-0504.

### NEW JERSEY

#### Newark

**What Lessons Should Working People Draw from the Elections in France?** Speaker: Ved Dookhun, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., May 17, 7:30 p.m. 506 Springfield Ave., 3rd Floor. Donation: \$4. Tel: (973) 643-3341.

### NEW YORK

#### Brooklyn

**Workers in New York Respond to First Steps toward Massive Cuts.** Speaker: Salm Kolis, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., May 17, 7:30 p.m. Dinner at 6:30 p.m. 372A 53rd St. (at 4th Ave.) Donation: \$5 program, \$6 dinner. Tel: (718) 567-8014.

#### Garment District

**Workers Resist City Hall Attacks.** Speaker: Maggie Trowe, Socialist Workers Party, garment worker. Fri., May 17, 7:30 p.m. 545 8th Avenue, 14th Floor. Donation: \$4. Tel: (212) 695-7358.

#### Upper Manhattan

**Stop Police Brutality.** Speaker: Maurice Williams, Socialist Workers candidate for mayor of Newark. Fri., May 17, 7:30 p.m. Dinner at 6:30 p.m. 599 W. 187th Street, 2nd Floor. Donation: \$5. Tel: (212) 740-4611.

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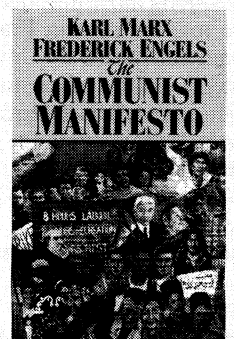
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**Voluntary requirement?**—The California Senate approved a bill making it mandatory for public school children to recite the Pledge



Harry Ring

of Allegiance. Perhaps sardonically, the senators added that pupils and employees could remain seated and not be subject to "discipline, retaliation or ostracism."

**Apparently, his rights were respected**—Rev. Carl McIntire checked out at age 95. The L.A. *Times* described him as "a firebrand fundamentalist radio evangelist who railed against communism, liberalism, racial integration, sex education, evolution and water fluoridation from his broadcast pulpit for four decades."

**How about human 'stuff'?**—In New York, astronomical rents drive countless families to stuff countless numbers of relatives and friends into their apartments. But a Brooklyn landlord got a court ruling that Fei Xu, 71, has too much stuff in his modest apartment.

An avid collector of things, his apartment is jammed with electrical appliances, suitcases, chairs, etc. A reporter says the collection is carefully organized, and a fire dept. spokesperson said a description did not indicate any violation. The housing court judge, however, agreed with the landlord, and ordered Xu to cut the collection in half or face eviction.

**Oh, the poor rich**—The "Panic Room" isn't just a movie. The Toronto *Globe & Mail* reports that in both Canada and the United States wealthy people are installing high-tech bunkers. According to the paper, buyers are "usually the rich

and famous who fear kidnappers, stalkers, terrorists, assassins and plain old robbers." The article was headlined "Cowering in luxury."

**No bunker complex?**—The L.A. *Times* real estate section tapped it as "Home of the Week." Features include six bedrooms, a guest apartment, and three elevators. (One runs express to the wine cellar.) Perhaps for security concerns, there's no mention of a panic suite. Nor is it cheap. The asking price, \$29.95 million.

**America the beautiful**—Yun Tau Chee, a Hawaiian, died recently at 73. In 1948, she was the first Asian

contestant in the annual Atlantic City beauty contest, which was established in 1921. It was limited, by written rule, to members of the "white race." In 1941, Mifauny Shunatona, a Native American, busted in, and in 1945, Bess Myerson, who was Jewish, won the cup. In 1948 Irma Nydia Vasquez, a Puerto Rican, won entry along with Ms. Chee. In 1970, Cheryl Brown, became the first Black contestant.

**Holy macaroni**—According to a *USA Today* survey, the cost of weddings in a good part of the country range from about \$17,000 to \$19,000. For the Big Apple, the tab is, on average, \$31,800.

## Capitalist disaster deepens for Argentine workers

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

Fears of hyperinflation that could stoke more working-class explosions are haunting the regime in Argentina, still paralyzed in face of a downward economic spiral with no end in sight. With the economy in a free fall and the banking system in collapse, the deepening capitalist disaster gripping the country has devastated the lives of working people.

Economy minister Roberto Lavagna announced May 3 that prices rose 10 percent in April, the fourth consecutive month of such increases. Combined with the nearly 70 percent decline in the value of the peso against the dollar since January, this adds up to a monthly inflation rate of nearly 20 percent. These conditions have devastated the purchasing power of working people and middle-class layers who are already scraping by on meager earnings.

According to a CNN dispatch many workers dispute the government's figures that "seemed out of touch with the daily reality trying to make ends meet on wages cut to the bone after a four-year recession." The news agency reported that prices of basic foods and clothing that make up the bulk of purchases for working people rose between 30 and 50 percent in April and are up 150 percent since January.

"It's a lie that prices have risen 10 percent. It's a lot more," asserted Adela Lamas, a mother of four who earns about \$4 a day selling track suits at a street stand outside a railroad station in Buenos Aires. "I have to feed my kids, but with these prices it's impossible to live."

The *New York Times* ran an article titled "Steak endures in lean times." The paper reported that "many working people have given up beef altogether" and that no longer "do construction workers set up makeshift grills at curbside to cook steaks for lunch or dinner," but added that the "young, hip and beautiful" still pour into restaurants to "devour delectable sushi and ceviche and

sample flights of chardonnay."

Figures released in 1999 show 20 percent of the population lives on \$2 a day or less. Unemployment is now at almost 25 percent. More businesses are on the verge of collapse with almost no access to local or international bank loans.

### Pressure from IMF

The regime is facing increasing pressure from imperialist investors to push through an economic program of harsh austerity measures in exchange for loans to infuse the country's paralyzed banking system. As a stopgap measure the government is seeking a bridge loan—to pay some \$800 million it owes to the World Bank in May. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) froze loans after Buenos Aires suspended payments on its \$141 billion foreign debt in December.

IMF spokesman Thomas Dawson said, once "key elements" of the austerity plan are in place, the imperialist financial institution would send a "full mission to Buenos Aires to negotiate a new agreement," the *Wall Street Journal* reported May 3.

For a decade leading up to the social explosions that erupted last December, the Argentine government followed the advice of Washington and the IMF, pegging its currency, the peso, to the dollar on a one-to-one basis, selling off state enterprises, and implementing other antilabor measures. Hailed as an economic model by the imperialists, today the country is reeling from one crisis after another.

Two more Argentine companies defaulted on their loans largely as a result of bringing in revenues in depreciating pesos while holding dollar-denominated debts. Imagen Satelital SA missed a \$4.4 million interest payment, and Cablevision SA missed a \$36.1 million payment. A default is defined as being more than 90 days behind in payments.



Militant/Romina Green

Hundreds of workers in Neuquén, Argentina, marched January 7 to oppose devaluation of peso and other measures by President Eduardo Duhalde. Rising prices have devastated buying power of toilers, who revolted against capitalist crisis last December.

## —25 AND 50 YEARS AGO—

25 CENTS  
**THE MILITANT**  
A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY/PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE

May 27, 1977

With the blessings of the Carter administration, coal companies have launched a massive offensive against the United Mine Workers of America. They are threatening to destroy national collective bargaining in the coal industry.

By repeatedly violating contract provisions, the employers (called coal operators) have provoked a series of wildcat strikes in the eastern coalfields.

Many of the company violations are literally life-and-death questions for coal miners.

The operators want a free hand to maximize production without "interference" from safety regulations. That's why 393 coal miners died on the job between the December 1973 and September 1976 UMW conventions.

Now President Carter demands vastly increased coal production as part of his energy plan—while he also seeks to eliminate allegedly "burdensome" regulations on job safety and pollution. This is a formula for slaughter in the mines.

When miners strike in self-defense the operators and big-business press rail against "anarchy" in the coalfields.

The president of the Bituminous Coal Operators Association, Joseph Brennan, has been asking in recent speeches, "What value is there to a contract when individuals with seeming impunity can violate it and in so doing can shut down large portions of the coal industry?"

Brennan and his fellow operators would like to see a return to the 1920's when negotiations took place on a company-by-company basis. Employers could play off sections of the union against one another, keep wages low, and ignore pleas for safer conditions.

**THE MILITANT**  
PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE  
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May 26, 1952

Bolivia's new government took a step toward the nationalization of the country's tin mines on May 14 when President Víctor Paz Estenssoro issued a decree establishing a nine-member commission "to study the bases and conditions for the nationalization through expropriation of the mines controlled by or belonging to the enterprises forming the Patino, Aramayo and Hochschild groups."

The commission was empowered to conduct hearings and obtain whatever data it needed from public and private sources, and was directed to submit a complete plan "for the legal expropriation of the mines listed" to the government within a maximum of 120 days.

This time limit appears to be a compromise between the positions previously taken by the two wings in the cabinet, which is controlled by the National Revolutionary Movement (MNR).

The right wing of the cabinet, headed by Paz Estenssoro, favors a "cautious" and slow approach to nationalization, seeking not to offend Washington and hoping for some kind of understanding with the tin barons. Paz had said, when he was inaugurated President last month, that he thought the projected commission would need at least six months to study the question.

The MNR left wing, headed by Juan Lechín, Minister of Mines and Petroleum and leader of the Bolivian labor movement, has taken the initiative in pressing for nationalization of the mines. The unions have demanded nationalization without compensation and workers control of the nationalized industries, and Lechín publicly declared a month ago that the nationalization commission would not need more than a month to complete its proposals.

## Washington moves to restore military ties with Indonesia

BY PATRICK O'NEILL

Washington is moving to restore open ties with the Indonesian armed forces. On April 24 a U.S. delegation of State Department and Pentagon officials held two days of talks with representatives of the Indonesian government and military. The came session after the Bush administration sent the U.S. Congress plans to train and equip a new Indonesian security force.

"We hope that the military cooperation between Indonesia and the United States will finally reawaken," said Admiral Widodo Adisutjipto, the head of the Indonesian military, as the talks opened.

To date, the U.S. government has stopped short of attempting to officially repeal its embargo on military assistance to Jakarta. The ban was imposed almost three years ago as the U.S. rulers put some public distance between themselves and the Indonesian military, amid revelations of an army-organized reign of terror on East Timor by anti-independence militias in mid-1999. Later that year East Timor was occupied by a United Nations force, headed by the Australian armed forces, that included U.S. troops.

Washington maintained close ties with Jakarta for more than three decades before the ban, backing the dictator Suharto until

his resignation in 1998. The period included Jakarta's 1975 invasion and later annexation of East Timor.

Commenting on the talks, former Indonesian defense minister Juwono Sudharsono lamented the impact of three years of more limited relations. Of the 70 percent of Indonesia's military equipment supplied by the United States, less than half is today operational, he said. The equipment includes a fleet of F-16 fighter jets.

The U.S. rulers' concern over instability in Indonesia, a country of more than 210 million people on which the international capitalist economic crisis is having a deep impact, was reflected in Bush's proposals for a new security force. The "domestic peacekeeping force [will] help Indonesia quell sectarian violence," claimed the *New York Times*.

"As Indonesia faces an increasing breakdown in law and order, and separatist movements persist in...Aceh and Irian Jaya," continued the big-business paper, "the Pentagon is not alone in seeking ways to work with the Indonesian military. Japan and Singapore...are urging the Bush administration to work with the army, historically the institution that has kept the sprawling archipelago together."

# U.S. out of Indian subcontinent

Through its war against Afghanistan, U.S. imperialism has expanded its military operations and assaults across the region, daily pressing to assert what Washington considers its right to send its troops, warplanes, and ships where it wants, when it wants.

From extensive SWAT-style shoot-to-kill missions to get the "ragheads" as one British officer called the U.S. military missions in Afghanistan, to setting up air bases in Central Asia and Pakistan, to naval patrols from India to Somalia, Washington is extending its military, economic, and political tentacles across the region. Its aim is to hold together its domination over a disintegrating capitalist world order, as it represses working people resisting the effects of the world economic crisis. All that Washington has to offer people of the region is war, national oppression, and social crisis.

As the military tensions between India and Pakistan flare up and temporarily recede, working people in the United States, the Indian subcontinent, and elsewhere should demand the withdrawal of U.S. and allied forces from Afghanistan and the surrounding countries. U.S. imperialism and its armed forces are the number one enemy of working people in the region. Uniting the toilers of the region to battle the growing imperialist military presence and domination is the only road to throw off foreign domination and press forward the national unification struggle on the Indian subcontinent.

Regardless of the specific issues behind the current military tensions, the source of the conflict between India and Pakistan is rooted in developments that occurred in 1947 when the departing British imperialists created Pakistan as a spearhead against the Indian revolution. Its divide-and-rule strategy was aimed at countering the powerful movement against colonial rule, including mobilizations by the country's industrial proletariat, that was growing on the Indian subcontinent.

Armed and backed by Washington for decades, Pakistan remains a bulwark for imperialism against the battles by working people on the Indian subcontinent to address the unfulfilled tasks of national unification. The current

Pakistani leader, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, has continued this close relationship with Washington, opening up the country's air bases to U.S. forces and cooperating with U.S. military actions in Afghanistan.

The conflict between New Delhi and Islamabad aids the imperialist military drive in the region. Washington presses the Musharraf regime to crack down on opponents and "extremists," and takes steps to deepen its military and economic ties to New Delhi. The U.S. imperialists hope that India can be a potential counterweight to the Chinese workers state next door, giving it growing strategic and military importance to Washington. Before the world, U.S. officials pose as the rational peacekeepers shuttling between two somewhat hothead nations, covering up the fact that imperialism is responsible for the division of the subcontinent and conflicts arising out of the unresolved tasks of the national revolution.

The continuing conflict helps to lay bare the need to confront these tasks of the mighty revolutionary struggles that broke India's colonial bondage and won the country's independence from British imperialism in 1947. The partition of India and the formation of a pro-imperialist outpost helped block the formation of a modern, centralized nation-state.

Today the two governments use the divisions to turn workers and peasants away from a struggle against their common exploiters and oppressors. Each uses the issue to whip up chauvinist and communal hatreds among their peoples to divert attention from their failure to cope with internal social and economic problems. The Pakistani regime cynically claims to support the Kashmiri peoples' aspirations, and uses the conflict to exert continuing military pressure on India and inflict a growing death toll in the area.

By helping to get out the truth about imperialism's brutal record in the region and Washington's continuing military drive today, working people around the world can weigh in the struggle to rid the region once and for all of the imperialist exploiters and their legacy of national oppression and division.

# New tensions in Europe

Continued from Page 8

ment and trade with the countries of eastern Europe, two of which, Poland and the Czech Republic, share a common border with the German imperialist colossus.

In the past decade a number of German corporations have moved their manufacturing operations to Poland and the Czech Republic, where wages are frequently 80 percent lower than those in Germany.

All but two of these prospective members are workers states whose economies are still marked by the social relations forged with the overturn of capitalism following World War II. The pro-capitalist rulers of Poland and other such states are driving to impose austerity measures on workers and farmers in order to qualify for EU membership and the trade and investment they expect it to bring.

At the same time, they balk at the massive task of dismantling the institutions of the nationalized economy and the social relations bound up with it. Warsaw has proposed a delay of 18 years in granting permission for private sales of land following its accession to the EU. Hungary and the Czech Republic, which have proposed a ten-year land-sale moratorium, "fear Germans would snap up much of the land," according to the *Financial Times*. The French government has declared its opposition to such transitional measures.

## Tensions over agricultural subsidies

Far from diminishing, tensions and disputes between the two largest imperialist powers in Europe are tending to sharpen somewhat. Writing in the May 10 *Tribune*, John Vinocur stated that a "major clash" is in the offing between France and Germany that "nobody in France's hierarchy likes to talk about."

Both the Social Democratic and Christian Democratic candidates in this year's German elections, wrote the journalist, "have made clear that time is up for the European Union agricultural arrangement that requires Germany to shell out billions to support French farmers. The arrangement is one of the basic Franco-German political understandings of postwar Europe and the Germans, across the board, want rid of it."

Berlin's stance, added Vinocur, "signals Germany's readiness (in full observation of the diplomatic niceties) to assume leadership of Europe now that 10 countries in its economic orbit are entering the EU over the next five years."

Even as they jockey to try to gain advantage against their rivals, the French rulers are confronted with the fact of the much greater weight of the German capitalist economy. At \$1.8 trillion, the German GDP is almost 40 percent greater than that of France, the next largest European economy. Some 35 percent of the economy is devoted to exports, more than half of which are in the EU.

At the same time, in spite of its exporting prowess, the German capitalist economy has been in the doldrums for much of the last decade, recording the slowest or second-slowest growth in Europe for the last six years. Official national unemployment stands at almost 10 percent. In the east the figure reaches above 15 percent.

Assessing these problems, the February 28 *New York Times* described Germany's "economic anemia at home, unhealthy dependence on exports...[and] inability to carry out much-needed financial and economic changes."

The "changes" advocated by the *Times* would involve cuts in social services and wages, requiring a deepening of the offensive against working people that the German capitalists—in common with others in continental Europe—launched years later than their rivals in the United States and the United Kingdom.

"The biggest reason why, in the past decade, the American economy has grown more than 60% faster than Western Europe's and why its unemployment rates have been nearly twice as low," lamented an editorial in the May 11 issue of the London-based *Economist*, "is that Europe's product and labour markets have been too rigid, its welfare too generous, its social costs too high for would-be entrepreneurs, its governments too scared to liberalize faster."

# Bipartisan anti-farmer bill

The content of the bipartisan farm bill signed by U.S. President George Bush this past week points to the need for the labor movement to put forward a program to defend the interests of working farmers who are debt slaves exploited by big monopolies and banks. The new measure, like earlier farm legislation, is an assault on small farmers across the country. It provides massive subsidies to capitalist farmers and corporations who will receive the lion's share of the \$190-billion government largesse. More than two-thirds of the subsidies will go to the largest 10 percent of farms.

The bill highlights how the tiny minority of billionaire families who hold state power use governmental policy to advance their class interests. The enormous subsidies serve to strengthen the capacity of wealthy farmers and agricultural monopolies to trade food and fiber on the world market, enabling them to undercut their competitors.

Washington's farm policy also has a devastating impact on semicolonial countries. The government of Brazil pointed out that sales of soybeans and cotton at below-market prices by U.S. monopolies has cheated them out of \$1.5 billion in exports. And despite imperialist propaganda about "feeding the world," millions of people are starving in the Third World. Nearly half the population on the planet ekes out an existence on less than \$2 a day.

The government subsidies are a guaranteed source of income for the capitalist exploiters, who profit from the labor of working people. The subsidies reinforce divisions in the countryside between wealthy and working farmers, and buttress the power of the agricultural monopolies, which squeeze small farmers every which way they can.

Due to some exposure of the unequal impact of government subsidies, the character of these so-called "farm" bills is more widely appreciated today. Nevertheless, the capitalist media continually tries to mask the fact that farmers are class-divided. There are a small number of capitalist farms and ranches run by some of the largest corporations in the United States that exploit wage labor; a larger group of small capitalist farmers who exploit both family

and wage labor; and the vast majority of farmers who are exploited independent commodity producers employing little or no wage labor. Many of these working farmers depend on off-farm jobs to make ends meet.

It is not primarily natural conditions such as bad weather and insect plagues that devastate working farmers. Rather, it is the normal functioning of the capitalist system in which working farmers are victims of social conditions beyond their control. They are caught in a vise between low prices received for their commodities and monopoly-rigged prices they have to fork out for machinery, fertilizer, and fuel. Through the capitalist rents and mortgage system, landlords and bankers suck up huge amounts of wealth created by toilers on the land, transferred to them through the medium of rent and interest payments. Moreover, when farmers can no longer keep up payments, these parasitic exploiters simply drive them off the land.

The labor movement needs to extend the hand of solidarity to working farmers, joining with them to demand a halt to all farm foreclosures. Instead of being driven deeper into debt slavery, small farmers should have access to government-funded cheap credit and guaranteed price supports from the federal government large enough to cover their full production costs and provide a decent and secure income for themselves and their families. Today this is especially true for the working farmers who have been devastated by drought conditions in the western plains states from Montana to Texas.

The working class in the United States should also demand that Washington cancel the foreign debt that has been imposed on semicolonial countries and end the enormous subsidy programs that enable U.S. monopolies to block off agricultural commodities produced by toilers in other lands.

Through waging battles around these demands vanguard workers and farmers will forge a leadership and a fighting alliance of the toilers that can take on the capitalist exploiters and defeat them. This is the only real solution to the farm crisis: a revolutionary struggle that charts a course to establish a government of workers and farmers.

## CORRECTION

Two errors in an article which appeared in the May 13 issue, titled "Vote in France deepens crisis of bourgeois parties," have been brought to our attention. The first is the statement that the 28 percent abstention rate was the highest in French history in a "national vote." In fact the abstention rate was the highest ever in a presidential election. The presidential system in France began under the government of Gen. Charles de Gaulle in 1958. De Gaulle was the first president and assumed office in January 1959.

The article also noted that both the Gaullist party of President Jacques Chirac and the social democratic party of Lionel Jospin "are more and more seen by working people as co-responsible for the antilabor offensive at home. Offering no solutions to the economic hardship millions face on a daily basis, they face collapse." The final phrase of the last sentence is, on the face of it, incorrect, since both parties continue to function in French bourgeois politics.



# How the fascists came to power in Spain in 1930s

Printed below is an excerpt from *Revolution and Counterrevolution in Spain* by Felix Morrow. This is one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for May. Morrow's account was written as events themselves unfolded in the Spanish civil war in the 1930s. The piece quoted is from the author's postscript, completed in May 1938.

The central theme of Morrow's book is the futility of attempting to defeat Gen. Francisco Franco's attack on the Spanish Republic through a People's Front coalition with the bourgeoisie—the strategy followed by

fascist revolt broke out. He moved heaven and earth to get away from Madrid in the dark days of the siege in November, 1936. When Catalan autonomy was done away with and the CNT troops were at last subordinated entirely to the bourgeois régime, Pozas was appointed chief of all the armed forces of Catalonia and the Aragon front. He effectively purged the armies of CNT [National Confederation of Labor, the Anarcho-syndicalist trade union federation] and POUM "uncontrollables," arranging for whole divisions to be wiped out when they were sent under fire without artillery or aviation protection. "Comrade" Pozas, who graced the plenum of the Central Committee of the PSUC [the unified socialist and Stalinist party of Catalonia], was "obviously" the man to hold the Aragon front against Franco.... Now he is in a Barcelona prison, charged—and the military story is only too clear—with betraying the Aragon front to Franco.

## Consequences of Peoples Front program

The consequences of the alliance with the "republican" bourgeoisie, of the People's Front program, are now apparent. The fascists have reached the Mediterranean. They have split the remaining anti-fascist forces in twain. For the time being the race between Franco and the regroupment of the proletariat has been won by Franco. The Stalinists, the Prieto and Caballero socialists, the anarchist leaders, have proven insurmountable obstacles on the road to regroupment, immeasurably facilitating Franco's victory.

These criminals will soon fall out among themselves. They will attempt to shift the blame on each other. In that attempt, much more will be revealed concerning the machinations whereby they bound the workers and peasants hand and foot, and made impossible a successful war against Franco. But already we know enough to say that no alibis will enable them to clear themselves. All—Stalinists, socialists and anarchists—are equally guilty of having betrayed their followers. All have betrayed the interests of the workers and peasants—the interests of humanity—to the bestial régime of fascism.

Many will escape from Franco, as did the Stalinist and social-democratic functionaries from Hitler. But the millions of workers



Young workers mobilize in 1936 to fight fascists in Spain. Gen. Franco's forces triumphed despite militant resistance by Spanish proletariat during civil war in 1930s because of betrayal of working class fighters by Socialist Party, Stalinists, and anarchists.

and peasants cannot escape. For them, today, tomorrow, the next day, as long as life continues, the task of smashing fascism remains to be carried out. Fight or be crushed—they have no other alternative.

The Spanish proletariat—crushed, as Berneri said, between the Stalino-Prussians and the Franco-Versaillaise—may yet touch off a flame that will again light up the world. Passing beyond the Pyrenees, where the period of the People's Front, as in Spain, is closing, that flame can unite with the hopes of the French proletariat, now faced with a choice between naked bourgeois dictatorship and the road of revolution.

But if the revolutionary conflagration does not break out, or is smothered, what then?

The tragic lessons of Spain are, in any case, of profound concern to the American working class and have an immediate bearing upon "purely American" problems.

Here the issue will soon enough be posed as inexorably as in Spain or France. The simple truth is that American capitalism has arrived at such an impasse that it can no longer feed its slaves. An army of the unemployed as large as that of 1932 now receives at Roosevelt's hand a fraction of the inadequate hand-out offered in 1933.

The production index drops at four and five and six times the rate of the 1929–1932 decline. The government prepares cold-bloodedly for imperialist war as a "way out." Crisis, unemployment, war—these have become the "normal" characteristics of the declining capitalist order. Since 1929 America has been "Europeanized." We face here the problems which have been faced

since the war by the European proletariat.

Pessimism, defeatism, these are the reactions of the few, who thereby deduce from the reformist betrayals in Europe a justification for abandoning the American masses to a like doom. But to the workers and the oppressed toiling masses of city and country, pessimism and defeatism are alien. They *must* fight or be smashed—they have no other alternative.

The vast, inexhaustible vitality of the American working class is the richest capital of the international labor movement. It has yet to be used, yet to be thrown into the breach. In the last four years, the American proletariat has given such evidence of its resources and its power as many of us did not dream of in 1933. It has organized itself within the very citadel of American capitalism—steel, rubber, autos. It can overthrow that citadel—if it has the will to do so and a leadership capable of assimilating the lessons of these catastrophes.

The task of the book is to provide the class-conscious worker and his allies in America with materials for understanding why the Spanish proletariat has been defeated, and by whom betrayed.

The heroism of the Spanish workers and peasants must not be in vain. From their failing hands the banner of struggle to the death against capitalism can be taken up by the American workers. Let them grasp it with the aid of a vanguard which has assimilated all the terrible lessons of Russia, Spain and France, with a strength and assurance such as the world has not yet seen, and carry it through to victory, not only for themselves, but for the whole world of toiling humanity!

## BOOKS OF THE MONTH

both the Stalinists and Socialists after September 1935. In order to keep the bourgeoisie in the coalition, the workers' organizations, including the anarchists and centrists, agreed to forswear the most urgent demands of the Spanish peasants and workers—agrarian reform and workers' control of industry—and the demand for the independence of Morocco from Spanish tyranny. Morrow's other major theme is the role a revolutionary party could have played had one been created in time to defend the revolutionary aspirations of the workers and peasants against these betrayals. Copyright © 1936, 1938, 1974 by Pathfinder Press, reprinted by permission. Subheadings are by the *Militant*.



### BY FELIX MORROW

The jailing of workers and peasants and the opening of the front lines by "republican" officers to the fascists: that is the story of Loyalist Spain from November, 1937 to May, 1938. There is time and space to add only a few words as this book goes belatedly to press.

General Sebastian Pozas adequately symbolizes the period: An officer under the monarchy; an officer under the republican-socialist coalition of 1931–1933; an officer under the Lerroux-Gil Robles *bienio negro* of 1933–1935. Minister of War before the

## May BOOKS OF THE MONTH

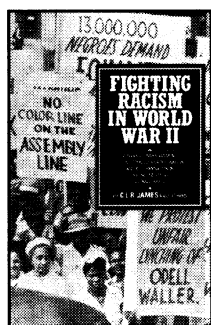
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## U.S. extends operations in Afghanistan

### Continued from Page 16

Pakistan is an easy place for criminals to hide," said Pakistani Col. Shah Wali, rationalizing the imperialist trampling on his nation's sovereignty.

Seven months after launching a brutal war against Afghanistan that toppled the Taliban government, Washington is still seeking to construct a pro-imperialist government that can maintain a semblance of stability in the country. The interim regime of Hamid Karzai installed by the U.S. rulers last January is preparing to use Afghan soldiers in Kabul for the first time, backed by U.S. firepower, against rival militias.

"Will Afghanistan be a centrally run state with the seat of power in Kabul?" said a May 11 article in the *New York Times*. "Or will it remain largely a tenuous federation of warlords whose main allegiance is to themselves?"

"Teams of American Special Forces, who built relationships with anti-Taliban commanders during the first phase of the war," one newspaper reported, "have been assigned to remain with those leaders as they have become provincial governors wielding control sometimes greater" than the central government.

"They are the centers of power," a senior U.S. Defense Department official told the press. "We have influence we can exert in subtle ways with regional leaders, and we are using that influence to reinforce stability."

The "subtle" influence this military force has used was highlighted by a May 8 CIA-

organized assault outside Kabul by an unmanned surveillance aircraft carrying Hellfire antitank missiles. The aircraft, a Predator drone, fired on Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, the leader of a rival faction who had returned to Afghanistan in recent weeks after a long exile in Iran. The attack was the "first confirmed mission to kill" a militia leader who was not an official in the Taliban government or a member of al Qaeda.

Hekmatyar, who reportedly survived the assault, called Karzai a puppet leader who followed the dictates of the U.S. and other imperialist powers. "While foreign troops are present the interim government does not have any value or meaning," Hekmatyar said in a February interview with Reuters. "We prefer involvement in internal war rather than occupation by foreigners and foreign troops."

Another military confrontation is also under way to housebreak a regional leader in Khost province. According to media reports, the interim regime began mobilizing 3,000 Afghan troops in Kabul to force militia commander Padsha Khan Zadran to accede control of the province to an appointee of acting president Karzai. The troop deployment to confront Zadran is the first time Karzai's government has sent troops on a possible combat mission against a militia leader.

Zadran, a participant in the U.S.-crafted meeting in Bonn, Germany, that installed Afghanistan's interim government, was named governor of Paktia province. His faction controls 600 mercenaries who have been recruited, armed, and paid \$200 a month by U.S. forces to serve as foot soldiers.

## U.S. and allies extend military operations across Afghanistan

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

U.S. imperialist troops and allied forces are conducting extensive military operations across Afghanistan, as well as incursions across the border into neighboring Pakistan. Washington is reinforcing its major military bases in the country, out of which it conducts around-the-clock raids and systematic sweeps with the aim of crushing any resistance to the imperialist occupation.

Governments in Australia, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Norway, and the United Kingdom have each placed elite military battalions under U.S. command in Afghanistan.

"The goal here is to apply unrelenting pressure, so wherever they turn, they never can find any breathing space," said one unnamed Pentagon official speaking of continuing attempts to find Taliban and al Qaeda fighters.

Commenting on these operations, one British military official told the *Financial Times* that "the Americans seem to be operating like SWAT squads, with one thought in their heads: 'Let's go in and kill those ragheads,' as they call the enemy." Like the epithet "gooks," used during the Vietnam War, the term "ragheads"—referring to the turbans worn by men—is a racist dehumanization of the opposition that goes hand-in-hand with an imperialist military occupation.

The latest U.S. raid involved a "firefight" lasting a few minutes in Dehrawd, May 12. U.S. special forces killed five people on the grounds that they suspected them of being

Taliban or al Qaeda members. Thirty-two others were captured in this assault, in which only U.S. troops participated. Pentagon officials acknowledged that interrogations of the captured men indicated that they probably were not Taliban or al Qaeda.

The imperialist military operation has become "more like what the United States Army tried to do in the middle of the Vietnam War" than the Afghan operation of the last seven months, reported the May 6 *New York Times*. The paper noted the "considerable risks" involved in the military actions such as "American casualties" and "inflaming local hostility to foreigners on Afghan soil."

Currently 7,000 U.S. troops are deployed throughout Afghanistan, with 3,000 U.S. GIs, 1,700 British royal marines, and several hundred Canadian soldiers stationed at the Bagram Air Base near Kabul. Some 1,000 soldiers, including 150 U.S. Special Forces troops, as well as 700 Canadian, Australian, and British troops, have been sent to the eastern province of Khost and across the border into Pakistan. Another 4,000 troops comprised of three battalions of the U.S. 101st Airborne Infantry and the Third Battalion of the Canadian Princess Patricia light infantry, are based at the Kandahar Airport.

### 'A protracted guerrilla war'

The 1,000-strong British commando force, incorporating about 100 U.S. troops, which has been conducting raids and sweeps in the mountainous southeastern region of



British troops prepare to board Chinook helicopters for airlift to southeastern Afghanistan where they were to undertake military operations.

Afghanistan, has so far encountered no Afghan fighters. In a simultaneous operation in another mountainous area of eastern Afghanistan some 300 Canadian infantry troops, along with 90 GIs from the 101st Airborne Division and some Afghan soldiers, have also come up short. As a result, some British soldiers and officers have begun to express doubts and criticisms about these imperialist military operations, despite the official claims of success.

"The mission in the end is to kill or capture al Qaeda and Taliban, and if we don't, then we have not accomplished our mission," said a British captain, frustrated with the lack of military engagement with Afghan fighters.

During the operation British forces handed out flyers in the local Dari and Pashto languages. "The soldiers in your area

are British," they read. "They are here at the invitation of the Afghan Interim Authority. They are here to capture al Qaeda and their supporters. If you cooperate they will do you no harm." The *Financial Times* portrayed the message as an attempt to "win over Afghan people," but its threatening implications could hardly be missed by workers and peasants in the area.

Attacks on U.S. and allied forces over the past week include five separate incidents of rocket firings at military facilities. On May 12 two rockets were shot at the airfield in Khost and for the second time in two weeks a rocket missed U.S. Special Forces deployed in Pakistan. The target was a vocational school in Miran Shah that had been taken over by the troops.

According to the *Financial Times*, British general Roger Lane "privately accepts that the current military offensive is no longer suitable for what in effect has turned into a protracted guerrilla war." The article suggested that Taliban fighters "have temporarily melted into the local civilian population."

Meanwhile, the imperialist occupation force has spread out into eight other locations covering a 350-mile zone that includes military bases in the towns of Khost, Gardez, and Ghazni, as well as the base at Bagram and the airport at Kandahar.

Pentagon officials announced that U.S. military operations in Pakistan could last at least until the fall. Special Forces troops have been accompanied by Pakistani soldiers during raids there.

"The border is not controlled properly...."

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## Grand jury indicts mine bosses for lying about safety and dust levels at mine face

BY JEREMY ROSE

PITTSBURGH—A federal grand jury on May 8 handed down indictments charging KenAmerican Resources Inc., a Kentucky coal-mining company, and four bosses at its Paradise No. 9 Mine, near Central City, Kentucky, with falsifying safety records and manipulating equipment used to monitor coal dust levels.

The indictment alleges numerous violations of the Mine Safety and Health Act, a federal law intended to wipe out the two most common diseases caused by coal mine dust, black lung, and silicosis. The law calls for adequate ventilation and testing of coal dust levels. If convicted on all counts, KenAmerican faces a fine of up to \$11 million. The four bosses face maximum penalties of prison terms ranging up to 102.5 years and fines ranging up to \$5.4 million.

United Mine Workers of America president Cecil Roberts issued a sharply-worded statement May 10 declaring: "Wednesday's action against KenAmerican will spark a renewed interest by the federal Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) to fully enforce the laws governing dust levels in our nation's coal mines. If these charges hold up and appropriate fines are assessed and convictions made, the UMWA believes it will send a very strong message to operators nationwide who abuse the system and break the law that they can and will be held accountable for their actions. That alone is a huge step in the right direction. No coal miner, union or nonunion, deserves to jeopardize his or her health and safety for the sake of company profit."

### Rogues gallery

The rogues gallery of bosses and the penalties they face is as follows: Kenneth Tucker, a foreman, up to 102.5 years in

prison, a \$5.4 million fine, and supervised release for three years; Bobby Gibson, a superintendent, up to 19.5 years in prison, a \$1.4 million fine, and supervised release for three years; William Mallicoat, a superintendent, up to 13.5 years in prison, an \$805,000 fine, and supervised release for three years; Andrew Hickerson, a foreman, up to nine years in prison, a \$900,000 fine, and one year of supervised release.

In addition, the grand jury named three of the bosses for illegally alerting workers when federal safety inspectors were on the Paradise Mine site so that violations could be covered up. The indictment also charges Tucker with filing safety reports saying no hazardous conditions had been observed in the mine, when in fact they had been.

All four bosses are also charged with al-

Continued on Page 7

## Working-class community protests closure of low-cost store in Gothenburg, Sweden

BY CARIN THORSON  
AND ANDREAS BENGTTSSON

GOTHENBURG, Sweden—With banners and placards saying "Let Simmo stay" and "Let the people of Hjällbo decide," 400 people held a protest April 29 during heavy rain showers on the square of Hjällbo, a suburb of Gothenburg. The action is part of a fight to prevent the owner of the local shopping center from evicting Simmo Lågrpris (Simmo's Low Price Store).

Local bands played, representatives of different local organizations spoke, and young men and women collected names to support the demand to keep the store.

The eviction move came after one of the main food store chains in Sweden, ICA, demanded more space in the shopping center. The publicly owned real estate company Göteborgslokaler has agreed.

"We want Simmo Lågrpris here, where we can buy food from different countries, food that we are used to," said Rohi Masharawi, chairman of the Palestinian Coordinating Committee, one of the 19

local organizations sponsoring the protest. He was happy with the turnout, despite the weather.

Those backing the eviction "refer to what those of us who live here want. Well, we have spoken out today. Besides, only today we have collected 2,700 more names, to add to the 2,000 we already had before," said Masharawi.

Several people at the protest explained why they supported the demand for Simmo Lågrpris to stay. "They keep lower prices than other stores," said a Chilean woman who did not want to give her name. "Also, if you don't have enough money one day, you can pay later," she said. Other participants said the store owners organize to have the food of old and handicapped people carried home for free.

Since the April 29 demonstration, supporters of the store have organized protests outside the offices of Göteborgslokaler in the center of Gothenburg and on the square in Hjällbo.

The May 6 demonstration outside

Göteborgslokaler's office drew some 200 people chanting, "If Simmo moves, we will move" and "Long live Simmo Lågrpris." Many carried placards with slogans like "Let the people of Hjällbo decide," "WHY," and "Let Simmo Stay." Passing cars were encouraged to "Honk if you support Simmo," which many did.

Among the many young people at the action was 15-year-old Samira Hussein who spoke out against the arrogant attitude of Göteborgslokaler officials. "I can't understand why they are doing this. Everyone is supporting Simmo," she said. Samira was also a part of the April 29 demonstration and helped collect signatures among other youth. The action was characterized by the unity and confidence of the participants. And the fight is far from over.

Osama Abdullah, a chairman of Al Salaam, which organized to get the police permit needed for the demonstration, said: "We will continue this struggle until Göteborgslokaler gives us a concrete answer. We won't give up."